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MY LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS.

VOLUME III.

Frederick Augustus
Earl of Berkeley

MY LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS.

BY

THE HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY.

COMPLETE IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MY LIFE AND RECOLLECTIONS.

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THE marked success that has attended the publication of my reminiscences has stimulated me to proceed with the concluding volumes, which I trust may be considered as worthy as their predecessors, of popular favour. No excuse for the former can be required from the author—it being obvious that recollections of a career that commenced with the century, including what he heard from members of his family and friends, who enjoyed extraordinary social advantages, could not be so soon exhausted.

The strongest motive, however, that impels me to make such additions, is the desire to respond to the

demand for more entertainment of the nature of my former volumes, which has frequently been pressed upon me, and a wish to gratify many near and dear friends by a relation of incidents in my personal history well known to them that I have entirely omitted. In strict justice, I must acknowledge that there is another influence which induced me to take up my pen again; this is the necessity which certain recent attacks upon me has created, of proving the truth of some important and startling statements I then put forth.

As for replying to unfavourable criticism, I do not see that this is at all necessary—the public are the best judges of what pleases them. There can be no doubt that they have been entertained with my book —they are contented with it. Of course, I am contented with them. Surely nothing more on the subject need be said. But really, with one or two glaring exceptions, I have no reason to be dissatisfied with my reviewers; and to those who have treated me in a fair and liberal spirit I beg to express my hearty acknowledgments and thanks.

Having written these few sentences by way of introduction, I recommence my narrative with notices of several illustrious foreigners who have paid this country a visit. In my early days John Bull was characterized by an amount of prejudice against "the outside barbarian" that would have done credit to the most bigoted Chinese. Nevertheless, at the visit of the allied sovereigns, when the first Napoleon

had been sent to his small empire in Elba, I can well remember the enthusiasm which spread through all parts of the island to which the illustrious strangers penetrated.

So madly in love with old Blücher were the English populace, that during a review, while one mob were following the heels of the late Lord Londonderry, and another the heels of Blücher, so that it was impossible for either hero even to sneeze in private, both chanced to do the same thing. Blücher was vociferously cheered for it, and Lord Londonderry hissed and hooted—so much for the worth of popular worship.

The real object of hero worship was Marshal Blücher, who had to go through an amount of handshaking no other man could endure—except, perhaps, a president of the United States. Nothing could be more remarkable than the perfect understanding that existed between him and his admirers, considering that he knew not a word of what was said to him, and they found his German quite as unintelligible as their English. It was not then the fashion to bore remarkable people for their autographs or photographs. His new friends, too, were not aware that his signature was even more difficult to make out than his remarks; they, therefore, rested content with the honour of a grip from the old soldier, and talked of it ever after in the family circle as the greatest honour that could have befallen them.

Of our great allies, the Emperor Alexander

appeared the favourite. This arose partly from the rarity of a Russian Czar in this country—the last having been Peter the Great, who had visited us some two centuries before;—partly, perhaps, in acknowledgment of the superior title;—in part, no doubt, from the popular appreciation of his services in beating the much-detested Emperor of the French out of his dominions. Be this as it may, the favour with which the Emperor was regarded was extended to his uncouth Cossacks, which not even their filching and swallowing the oil from the street lamps—gas then not having come into use—affected in any material degree.

At a more recent period the Emperor Nicholas reciprocated this feeling in a manner likely to win him golden opinions—taking a personal interest in our national sports, particularly racing—a proof of which remained on one of the very best races of the year, withdrawn only, I think, on the late Crimean War. I do not believe that his Imperial Majesty desired to transplant the British Turf to his own ungenial soil; it happened to be the policy of Russia to be pleased with everything English, as it has since been, with less profit, to encourage everything American.

I remember well the Emperor Nicholas's fine person, and noble and courteous bearing, and the example he set to our lately-lamented Prince Consort, when the Czar observing a remarkably handsome lady standing at one of the receptions, stepped out

of the circle, and gallantly placed a chair for her. The coldness of his climate did not appear to have affected his Majesty's constitution—at least, so certain ladies of the Imperial Court testified, in a manner that ought to have satisfied the most sceptical.

There is a certain institution in St. Petersburg where young ladies born under peculiar circumstances are fashionably educated. The late Count de Morny, when sent by Napoleon III. to represent him, after the Crimean campaign, at the Russian capital, knew of this. He had also learnt that among the high-born pupils of the seminary there was one nearly related to the Czar: therefore, to indicate his Russian "proclivities" in a way that he thought would be most agreeable to the Court to which he was accredited, he paid the place an early visit, sought for, and obtained an interview with the interesting *élève*, did his best to render himself agreeable to her, and then applied to the Autocrat of All the Russias for permission to make her his Countess.

The Emperor was delighted with the Frenchman's *finesse*, and while gratifying his wishes, did not forget to bestow with the young lady a fortune corresponding with her exalted connexions. On this contingency, of course, the Ambassador had speculated, and having been thus enriched, on his return home, he contrived to put his new resources into first-rate investments. The Count was a very fortunate man, and though a *parvenu*, never forgot

the honour conferred upon him by this alliance with the Russian imperial family.

If the traditions of the Court of St. Petersburg are to be trusted, Alexander I. was not satisfied with being merely a Russian Sovereign among the fair sex—absolute as was the Czar at that time—he at times acted something after the fashion attributed to the Grand Turk, with this difference, that he was no respecter of the property of his subjects, however distinguished. The pupil of the seminary just alluded to was said to have been the daughter of a certain general's lady, without that officer's knowledge.

I did not hear that his Imperial Majesty had manifested a similar preference for anybody's wife during his short sojourn in England, nor should I have told it if I had; nor had any unmarried lady, as far as I am aware—but heaven only knows the truth—made him a captive. If anything of the kind occurred, it must have been managed with such secrecy as to have eluded the innumerable prying eyes that watched his proceedings.

During the occupation of Paris by the allies, I have been told that an Englishman, who evidently had no business there, and therefore was free to act as an amateur spy, wrote a long letter to Lord Castlereagh, describing most minutely a mysterious interview of a lady, closely disguised, with the Russian Emperor, after dark. The fair incognita was said to have been smuggled into the Czar's apartments, and

subsequently smuggled out, in a manner that baffled inquiry.

The writer of this secret intelligence fully expected a Consulate, at least, as his reward. The Foreign Secretary, however, was a man of the world, and having laughed over the mystification, took no further notice of the letter, as much to the disgust as to the disappointment of the busy-body, his correspondent.

Alexander was singularly susceptible of spiritual influences. There was a certain Mademoiselle Krudener, a *charlatane* in this line, who, had she lived till now, would have become as celebrated as Home, or the Brothers Davenport, with whom he was considered particularly intimate. She contrived to impress him with a vast amount of mysticism, and he for a time professed a high degree of religious feeling. Out of this idea originated "The Holy Alliance;" but our Government saw its Quixotic character, and declined to enter into it: the powers that gave their concurrence soon became aware of the impracticability of its objects, and suffered it to die a natural death.

At any rate, it was more creditable than the alliances I have just alluded to, which assuredly were *not* holy. A marriage *à la Russe*, under the paternal care of the Czar, seems to have become like a dinner *à la Russe;* no *pièce de resistance* was to be found in it, or at least *to be seen!*

In this respect there has been a marked alteration of late years, and weddings in St. Petersburg are

about as respectable as elsewhere. Nor was the Czar Alexander entirely responsible for the state of things existing in his country in his day; the exaggerated loyalty of his female subjects knew no bounds, and it could not have been till he left "Holy Russia" far behind him, that he had an opportunity of appreciating the character of the sex.

In England, the ladies who had the honour of an introduction must have impressed his Imperial Majesty with a high opinion of their worth, as well as of their beauty. They, however, were able to remain heart-whole in the presence of the northern Adonis—"Mistress of themselves though China fell"—and the empire of the two Russias went with it.

The King of Prussia and his sons were also prominent figures in the noteworthy group that attracted such throngs of delighted English sight-seers. They presented nothing very remarkable, and did not afford materials either for gossip or scandal. They reminded many of the elder spectators of their own sovereign, when, some twenty years before, he used to ride to reviews, accompanied by two or three of the royal princes, and were not the less popular with them on that account.

Another illustrious foreigner to be seen in our crowded thoroughfares, about the same time, was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. Though he visited us as a suitor for the hand of the idol of the nation, the Princess Charlotte, he came so slenderly provided,

or was so extremely unpretentious in his style of living, that he was content with a lodging at his tailor's. The humble were certainly exalted in this instance.

Remarkable have been the vicissitudes of his career. Starting as the scion of a Ducal House of very limited influence in Germany, he was selected to be the husband of the Heiress Apparent to the throne of England, cutting out that more important personage the Prince of Orange, afterwards King of Holland. The Princess Charlotte dying and leaving no issue, here, it may have been thought, would end the anticipations of future greatness such a marriage must have created. This, however, was far from being the case. He was offered the Kingdom of Greece, only to decline the honour; another member of the minor German royal families accepted it, and in the fulness of time was glad to get back to the Fatherland with a whole skin.

When Belgium was separated from Holland, and became a distinct kingdom, Prince Leopold was invited to rule over it, again displacing his old rival of Orange. He now married a daughter of his powerful neighbour Louis Philippe, King of the French. A new revolution broke out in Paris, and the high place which that astute sovereign had secured—not without some difficulty—knew him no more. While thrones were tottering around him, King Leopold sat firm on his own, supported by the affections of his people; and so sits, and so is likely

to remain as long as his valuable life shall be prolonged.

I remember his Majesty only as the quiet, handsome, and well-formed foreigner whom I have seen riding in the Park, or sitting with the Princess Charlotte in their opera-box. Since when I have seen another German Prince, equally "the observed of all observers," as closely associated with a more fortunate English Princess: the one rivalling his predecessors in the hold he maintained on the love and respect of the people of England—the other occupying so worthily the position her royal kinswoman would have filled had the life of her Royal Highness been spared, as to leave hardly room for regret for the young wife and mother, cut off in the very bloom of youth. Alas! the amiable Prince Consort has long ceased to move amongst the old familiar faces that peopled my town life. He has passed away never to return, leaving us an enduring memorial—the good he contrived to do while he so lived amongst us.

Another sovereign Duke, connected by marriage with our Royal Family, figured prominently for a time in English life. He made his Duchy too hot to hold him, and favoured England with his company; till here, too, an excess of reputation became inconvenient, and he left London for Paris, where he has since resided, amusing himself somewhat eccentrically, even for the tolerant Parisians, by cultivating a taste for pretty women and precious

stones; rather expensive hobbies, even for a German Prince. It is said that he possesses an interesting collection of both—some unpolished; but not having inspected either, I can give no opinion of their value.

During his sojourn in our metropolis the editor of a weekly journal, then of some small repute in the world of fashion, published a favourable comment on his Royal Highness—a distinction which was likely to be the more highly appreciated from its rarity. The Duke lost no time in calling upon this friend in need, expressed his royal gratitude, and presented him with a gold snuff-box.

His brother editors did not, perhaps, care to remember the anecdote of the good lady in the reign of the British Solomon, who gaped whenever Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, passed her casement, and when that dispenser of bribes inquired why she behaved to him in that extraordinary way, answered that she had a mouth to be closed as well as the rest.

Whether the Parisian Press have treated the deposed potentate as indulgently, I cannot say. Gold snuff-boxes have gone out of fashion; therefore possibly, a friendly editor may receive an honorarium from one or other of the Duke's collections—say—now a charming *lorette*—now an unset diamond.

The French are a gallant nation—the Parisian *homme de lettres* is a slave to beauty—still I am not certain that he would feel quite unembarrassed with the former present.

To the other source of his Royal Highness's liberality there could be no such objections, and as it is known to be a sort of private Golconda, I have no doubt that a fair or unfair amount of praise will be amply recompensed.

Another German Prince figures in my reminiscences—though he claimed the title *par excellence*. He belonged to a very different order of prince, and of man too, to the distinguished men I have just named. This is Prince Puckler Muskau, the author of a slight book of travels in England, that attracted some attention about thirty years ago. He appears to have been something of a fop, and a great deal more of a gossip—a fashionable bird of passage, going from place to place in search of ideas, and apparently, from his books, not finding many worth the carrying away.

When in Ireland, his Highness was mobbed by enthusiastic Celts, desirous of getting up a demonstration to express their hatred of what was English, in an affectation of intense admiration for what appeared to them most antagonistic to it. Paddy made a blunder as usual, misled by a resemblance in the sound of the name, and Prince Muskau was *fêted* as the Prince of *Moscow*—one of the first Napoleon's creations in the person of the gallant but unfortunate Marshal Ney. If the Irish had known how little of a Bonapartist was the object of their noisy regard, Prince Puckler would have been roughly handled. When he reached London, "the German Prince"

found more discerning friends; some, however, chose to take liberties with his title, and metamorphosed it into "Prince Pickle and Mustard."

I must not forget another personage of similar dignity who attained even greater celebrity than his compatriot Prince Pickle and Mustard. I heard much of him in my early days, though I cannot boast having had the honour of his acquaintance. This was Prince Hohenlohe, who put forward imposing pretensions as a worker of miracles—very imposing they were, I have no doubt, but not exactly in the sense his Highness's credulous admirers would have given to that word. If a saint in crape be twice a saint in lawn, as Pope declared, tenfold greater must be the saintship in purple and ermine. Surely, when translated to his appropriate sphere, so high and mighty a dignitary as was this pious potentate must have looked down upon plebeian saints as scarcely worthy of association.

I really have forgotten his Highness's miraculous achievements; but whether it was the rarity of the gift to which he laid claim, or the singularity of a German Prince coming forward as a new apostle, he was much talked about, not only on the continent but in England, and the halt, the deaf, and the blind were making the best of their way to his whereabouts, in the expectation of getting cured by his touch.

What success attended them I never heard; all I know is, the family do not seem to have profited much

by his miracles, for I saw lately an announcement of a prince of the same name having absconded from his creditors. Ordinary saints are declared to have had nothing in their scrip—not an unusual state of things with people who make no pretension to saintship, but have invested in non-paying railways, but this Highness may be safely considered more a prince than a saint—a sort of Serene "Hard-up," who has exhausted his resources, outlived his credit, and outran the constable.

Since the days to which I have been referring, my countrymen have become tolerably familiarized with German Princes, particularly since England has possessed princesses of a marriageable age. Some of the recent arrivals have carried off a happy bride; in one instance, at least, the happy bridegroom has elected to abandon the Fatherland; but all seem to have become tolerably popular with Englishmen.

An absurd apprehension has somewhat disturbed this good understanding, because a low German committed an atrocious murder in England. It was feared that if he were hanged, the high German community might be disgraced in the eyes of the multitude. This induced the King of Prussia and one of the minor princes to send telegraphic messages to an exalted personage in this country, to urge a pardon for the criminal. The ruffian was hanged, as he richly deserved to be, but his execution has not half as much affected the good name of Germans as their miserable campaign against the overmatched Danes.

Nothing could be less in accordance with an Englishman's ideas of fair play than the two big powers—Prussia and Austria—pitching into that little power, Denmark ; and when it was found that the former only combined to rob their weaker neighbour, and ostentatiously exhibited their self-glorification for having overpowered him, the German Princes who had any hand in the transaction sank irretrievably in English estimation.

Few foreigners have ever become more at home in English society than my old friend, Count D'Orsay, the *Beau par excellence* of his age, and very much more deserving that distinction than Brummell, Nash, Fielding, or any other of the oracles of dress and deportment who have given the law to their particular circle. D'Orsay was anything but a mere fop, nor was he a mere adventurer. He was a gallant gentleman of refined taste and aristocratic birth. His father was General Count D'Orsay, a noble of the *ancien régime*, and his name is still a household word among the historical sites of the French capital.

At his first visit to England, he was pre-eminently handsome; and, as he dressed fashionably, was thoroughly accomplished, and gifted with superior intelligence, he became a favourite with both sexes. He had the reputation of being a lady-killer, which, however, every good-looking fellow acquires if his *bonnes fortunes* become known—and his pure classical features, his accomplishments, and irreproachable get-up, were sure to make him the centre of attraction, whether in the Park or dining-room.

He used to ride pretty well to hounds, and joined the hunting men at Melton; but his style was rather that of the riding-school than of the hunting-field. I do not know of anything remarkable achieved by him in this line.

In dress, he was more in front; indeed, the name of D'Orsay was attached by tailors to any kind of raiment, till Vestris tried to turn the Count into ridicule. Application was made to his tailor for a coat made exactly after the Count's pattern. The man sent notice of it to his patron, asking whether he should supply the order, and the answer being in the affirmative, the garment was made and sent home. No doubt D'Orsay imagined that some enthusiastic admirer had in this way sought to testify his appreciation; but, on going to the Olympic Theatre to witness a new piece, he had the gratification of seeing his coat worn by Liston as a burlesque of himself.

As the Count will figure prominently in another chapter, I shall say no more about him here. He was the first of many foreigners bearing the same title who figured prominently in English society. Of these the most eminent were Counts Metaxa and Bathyany, whom I remember as enthusiastic patrons of the turf. Both were owners of race-horses, and their names were to be found in almost every great race.

English sport was much patronized by our distinguished visitors. The Emperor Nicholas, as is well known, established a particular race at one of our best annual competitions, and many wealthy foreigners

have regularly attended Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood, and Newmarket, betting largely, and running horses of their own. Tastes thus acquired they carried back with them to their own country, trying there to naturalize the sport they had enjoyed so much in England. With what success this has been done in France the splendid success of a French horse at the Derby of 1865 clearly testifies.

Of the many distinguished men who have remained with us in the character of Ambassadors, Prince Esterhazy deservedly maintained a high place in the world of fashion; later (earlier also, for, if I am not mistaken, he was in England many years before) came the far-famed Talleyrand. Both these celebrated characters I shall mention in a subsequent page. They were the greatest possible contrasts in appearance and in disposition.

As for emigrants, the number and variety would require a volume to do them justice. Two, however, must have a slight notice. Both have experienced the extremes of fortune, and one a singular reverse, after he had secured the highest object of his ambition. This was the Duc d'Orleans, who outlived a long exile during the first empire of France, to supersede on the French throne the elder branch of his house, and then having established himself as a popular sovereign, was a second time forced to become a fugitive in England.

The other was banished for being a Bonaparte, and after two unsuccessful efforts to take advantage of that powerful claim upon the affections of the French

people, at last, by treading as closely as possible in the steps of the first Emperor, became the chief of a Republic, and, finally, a second Emperor of France —apparently the most powerful as well as the most skilful of the two.

I shall elsewhere have to relate my personal knowledge of the last of these remarkable men; of his dethroned rival, Louis Philippe, I knew less. His sons, especially the Duc d'Aumale, are frequently to be met with, and in the best English society. Possibly they are looking out for another evolution of the wheel that has more than once given the great prize of the lottery to members of their family. The present position of the Duc d'Aumale, however, is too enviable, from the solid advantages with which it is surrounded, to be lightly risked. He is deservedly popular, possesses a highly cultivated mind, and in the enjoyment of a large fortune, can have no temptation to seek for so uncertain a glory as a Bourbon throne.

CHAPTER II.

JACK MUSTERS.

His mother and the Duchess of Rutland—His father a foxhunter of the olden time—Going into a quarry—A spoilt child—Jack's fight at Eton with Assheton Smith—His marriage with Miss Chaworth—His father's first whipper-in—He hunts at Annesley—Sells his hounds and horses—Hunts the Pytchley country—Sells his hounds at Colwick—Blowing up offenders in the hunting-field—Jack and the lawyer—Plays a trick on the hunt—The yeomanry at drill—His turn up with a bargeman—Ludicrous incident that occurred to him when commanding a company of militia—His son William—Pumping water — Friends of Jack Musters — Lord Middleton — Mr. Bennett Martin's foot-race with the Squire—Lord Rancliffe's supper with Lord Byron—Colonel Rolleston's predilection for very young ladies—Miss Musters—Jack at a cock-fight—His race with Mr. Hawker — Jumping the sugar-casks — Soft sawder.

One of the best of sportsmen and best of fellows that ever lived was the late Jack Musters. Of course, some of the anecdotes regarding his father, as well as himself, have been told me; and if I am correct in the date, Jack was twenty-three years my senior, having been born in 1777, so for a very considerable period, or as he developed into lusty manhood, I must have been at my nurse's breast; and therefore the lights and shadows of his earlier life were brightened or darkened by the touches of such of my seniors as either shared in or suffered from his good fellowship, or

power of supplanting them or cutting them out with the softer sex.

His mother, Mrs. Sophie Musters, as might be guessed from his personal graces, was one of the beauties of her day—a contemporary of the celebrated Duchess of Rutland; and both enjoyed considerable fame at Court. Each was beautiful, but at the same time distinct in the character of their attractions. Her Grace of Rutland was remarkable for a gorgeous style of dress, while her rival preferred to attire herself in the simplest fashion, but always with good taste.

His father was a thorough sportsman of the olden time; he went out with his hounds at an hour which would find the heads of our present sportmen immovable on the downy pillow; he had the advantage of dragging up to his fox when the latter had just curled his brush about his nose; was weary with his night's forage, and heavy with a full stomach—neither fit nor willing to make the most of his speed. The huntsman of that day generally accounted for his fox above or under ground, and then returned to a rare glass of old Port wine in early triumph.

There is a tradition still extant among the villagers in "Colwick"—the paternal estate—that one morning while hunting, the old gentleman was up in his stirrups, cheering the pack along, then running close upon their fox, and not looking at the possibility of running into anything else, when hounds and master came suddenly on a steep quarry near the park, and

that but for his huntsman, "Jem Ward," there might have been a who-hoop over their bodies, he interposing just in time to prevent a terrible catastrophe.

Jack was an only son, consequently over-indulged and immensely spoilt by his father, who rejoiced in the athletic and handsome boy as a true chip of the old block. The other children were daughters. Jack was sent to Eton, where he chiefly distinguished himself by fighting a long and obstinate battle with the late Assheton Smith, in which it has been told to me that Jack was victorious. In 1805 our hero was out upon the world, and thoroughly enjoying it, when he distinguished himself in love as he had done in war, by cutting out Lord Byron with Miss Chaworth, and marrying her. To this important incident in his career I shall refer to presently more at length.

Jack's father used to hunt from the kennels at Annesley, where his son now lived with the heiress, as well as at Colwick, much to the disgust of Jem Ward, the first whipper-in, who found considerable fault with the Annesley ale, compared with that at the old house at home, and seemed to think that no fox on earth could make up the difference. One very cold day, in returning from hunting, his young master, seeing that Jem's teeth were chattering prodigiously, said—"When you reach the hall, you shall have some of the old ale to warm you."

"Beg pardon, sir," exclaimed Jem, throwing up his forefinger to the peak of his cap, and apparently shuddering at the idea, "somehow or other, I've

such an unruly stomach, that blessed old ale goes wrong—it *don't warm*, it *starves me.*"

Jack was impetuous in the field, and, like every young sportsman in his earlier days, was all for "haste," which so often makes "waste," and in hunting frequently causes delay instead of speed. "D—n y', keep 'em on," he was perpetually saying to the men, when the old Squire was, as he thought, out of earshot.

"Let 'em alone, they are my hounds *yet*," was very frequently heard in reply.

The old boy would not stand any interference.

When Jack was the Squire at Annesley, for several seasons he hunted his own hounds, and an excellent pack I have heard they were. Topfull of good nerves, a firm hand, a sure seat, and a constitution which could stand any amount of wear and tear, he could go across country well, and knew the run of, and could kill a fox better than most huntsmen going. Somehow or other, I suppose from the want of money, Jack sold his splendid pack and his horses in London for a very high price; I believe one hunter, called "Brutus," was knocked down at 500*l.*

Too fond of the thing to give it up, in 1818 he got together a scrambling pack of fox-hounds, from everywhere and anywhere, and a very unsteady lot they were at first, killing, despite Jack and his men, some of the deer in Colwick Park. After a little time, however, he tamed them down, and brought out his young hounds in perfection. When the pack was thoroughly organized he took the "Pytchley Country,"

in Northamptonshire, and hunted there; but he subsequently gave this up, and took his horses to Colwick, ultimately sending them to Messrs. Tattersall's, by whom they were sold in the Colwick Kennel. Jack also sold hounds, I have been told, to Lord Middleton. He hunted, too, in Lincolnshire and other places.

As masters of fox-hounds we were widely different, for I was so fond of my hounds that I could never have parted with them, save by absolute necessity; I felt, moreover, a great attachment to particular places; besides which, I am quite sure that a huntsman cannot be too long in, or be too well acquainted with his country.

In athletic exercises Musters was a proficient; in short, in his prime he must have been as fine a man as ever lived. In the field, when indiscreet riders were pressing too close upon his hounds, he would do, as we all have ever since done, and will do as masters of hounds to the day of our death, "blow up" very severely, making his remarks tell on any personal defect in the offender which might at the moment catch his eye.

It is alleged that a solicitor of the name of Payne went to see him one day at Annesley, when Musters, taking his hunting-horn in hand, asked him if he could blow it, sounding a note on it himself; he then handed it to his visitor. The moment the hounds in the kennel heard the well known-horn, they set up a loud chorus. When they ceased, the lawyer tried his hand at the horn, but produced such discordant

sounds that the kennel echoed with angry and mournful howls. The Squire resuming the horn, remarked, "the hounds are certainly not your clients, unless ruined by litigation, and testifying their indignation at your *calling*."

About this period Musters had a subscription to his hounds, and played the hunt a very dangerous trick when the meet was at "Wiverton," near or on the River Smite, then in flood and overflow, all adjacent meadows being under water. A very large field was in attendance; this he observed, and whispering to his whippers-in not to follow him over the bridge, but quietly to slink away to a given spot, he took his pack, followed by the subscribers, over the bridge, when having gone a mile or more below it, he made his clever horse walk over an almost impassable foot-bridge, to aim at which he had to ride across three flooded fields by a way only known to himself. Having gained the side at which he had posted his whippers-in, leaving his thoroughly well-sold field staring in wild wonder at the manœuvre, he put his hounds into "Skinner's Cover," found immediately, and had a splendid run, all to himself, to "Stoke Holts," or some such place.

On a lovely day, at the close of one of those beautiful springs that used in Musters' time, and also in my early life, to usher in the summer, my friend strolled forth from Colwick Hall, with rod in hand, for some quiet amusement in the Trent.

On coming to the bank of the, in places, rapid Trent, he beheld the river, broad and hurrying,

dimpled and rippling, still and eddying, before him, leaving the emerald meadows on either side, decked in their golden flowers, and kissing the blue "forget-me-nots." Though hunting was over, he had always some active pursuit—night and day he was for ever busy; and on the morning to which I am referring, the cool river, with its inviting murmur at the warmth of the day, lured our fisherman to bathe. Pausing for an instant or two to look at the state of the water, shouts and cries, the trampling of horses, and the clash and clink of martial sabre-sheaths, attracted his attention, and on the other side of the river he beheld the yeomanry at drill.

"Better day for that," thought Musters to himself, "than it is for fishing; I'll go and see the fun."

So saying he sat down on the grass, and immediately undressing, made his clothes and shoes into as tight and small a bundle as he could, binding them with the aid of a handkerchief upon his head and shoulders, and then slipped quietly into the river, there a hundred yards wide, more or less, and very rapid. He was a strong, stout, and excellent swimmer, and did as any man in a tide should do—that is, not fight against the current, but go obliquely with it.

Musters soon did the distance, and landed on the opposite bank, when he suddenly became aware of a huge bargeman or boatman standing close by, with his eyes and mouth open in speechless astonishment. He looked at the bargeman with that good-humoured inquiring sort of smile on his face, with which he has

often regarded me when he wanted to see what I was up to. This continued some little time, Musters and the bargeman remaining face to face.

"Now, my good fellow," he cried, "the world's wide enough for both of us; I don't want you here; go on about your business, and I'll attend to mine."

"Sha'n't," was the rude reply. "Ise as motch right eer as thou hast, and I wanna go till oi loik."

"Oh, very well," said the Squire, taking out his pocket-handkerchief, very coolly, to assist the sun in drying his handsome limbs. Without another word, and in no sort of hurry or trepidation, he completed his toilet and stood up.

"I thought I told you to go away," he said to the man, while he walked deliberately up to him and put his clenched fist in his face.

"Dang it, if that be it, I'll have ye," was the response.

Down went his cap, and off went his jacket and shirt.

To it they went, and in an instant the straight, quick, lashing blow of Musters sent the boor upon his back. Up he got again, making a very wry face, but apparently nothing daunted, when a left and right dropped him on the grass again. The fellow now sat still, and murmured, "Ye be, zur, the best man, I acknowledges."

Leaving his opponent on the grass, an uglier if not a better man than he was before, the Squire turned away quietly, and went to amuse himself with the yeomanry at drill.

When this happened he must have been between thirty and forty, and therefore as good a man as ever he was. I am sure that up to fifty I knew nothing of the down-hill road of existence, although in the art of boxing in the ring, they designate a pugilist of 28 "an ould 'un." If a man does not smoke or drink too much, but leads a life of exercise and health, he may continue to enjoy the gifts of Heaven with the greatest zest and power till he verges on the usual allotted space.

It is said that when Musters commanded his company of Nottingham Militia, his men, like a good many more militia men, were very far from steady, particularly when advancing with charged bayonets, some of them stopping in their charge without the word, and others waiting for it.

"We'll do that again," cried the captain, "damn it, you can hear, so now, remember, no more stopping till I give the word 'halt,' and mind, above all things, your 'dressing'—that is, keep your line."

In order to see how they obeyed him, he placed himself several yards ahead of their centre, facing his men, and depending on his running powers of limb, he retreated backwards before them as they came on.

"Charge!" thundered his powerful voice—and they did charge. Musters' legs did their office well, but having no eyes in the back of his head, he never saw a thick quick-set brambly "bulfinch," or hedge, immediately in his rear, into which he came plump, this time his face to his friends and his back to the blackthorn bayonets of the ambushed foe, into which

he fell from the edge of the ditch, the agony of the moment making him forget to give the proper word.

His men, delighted with the fun produced by their captain's ludicrous position, came on with their bayonets levelled at his face.

"Halt, and be damned to you," thundered Musters; the company, of course, obeying, but not very steadily, as every file of them, non-commissioned officer, ensign, and lieutenant, were in fits of laughter, in which Musters at last heartily joined.

Though not a reading man he was very fond of music, and possessed a very fine voice.

With the stocking men of Nottingham, against whom he had a great dislike, he was often at war, and never was better pleased than when he went to punish some of them for trespass after his game.

His second son, William, hunted with his father a good deal, and rode remarkably well. The Squire remarked—"When I see master William's leather breeches, I know the hounds are not far off." It is said that the younger son, when out with the hounds at Colwick, cleared a dyke eleven yards wide. I believe that width has been cleared elsewhere at a brook. Going fast at a brook or dyke, the horse a good flying jumper, success may be imagined, but is very rarely achieved, and it is amusing to see how small a width of water, with a margin triflingly sedgy or suspicious, will stop a field. On my horse, Brutus, I once cleared twenty-three feet width in a standing jump.

There is another reason why greater extents of

water are not jumped more frequently than they are, let alone the "shutting up" of the rider. Horses are much inclined to shut up at wide-looking water, unless they have high courage, and been used to be resolutely ridden; leaving it entirely to the saddle to say what is practicable and what is not. Thus my horses, Jack and Brutus, as well as Mason, never thought of refusing.

Colwick Hall was sacked by the rioters during the Reform mania of 1831. Mrs. Musters and her son William were at home at the time, and she was supposed to have received so severe a shock from the violence of the mob that her health never recovered, and she died in February, 1832. Had Musters been at home, I will answer for it that the outrage had never been committed, and that he would thoroughly have made good his assertion, that "had I been there I would have saved the country some expense,"—that is to say, he would have shot the ringleaders; an act he was not only perfectly capable of, but, in my opinion, would have been thoroughly justified in committing.

Among Musters' friends, who used to visit, fish, shoot, and hunt with him, were the Lord Middleton of the day, and Mr. Bennett Martin. The latter piqued himself on being a fast runner. One day, while they were at the river side, Musters challenged Martin to run him a hundred yards; but the other, being the younger man, was to give ten yards. This was agreed, and Musters won, as a jockey would say, "well in hand." Musters then offered to run

the match over again, and give Martin ten yards; the latter of course accepted, but was beaten with as much ease as before.

Lord Rancliffe was one of the best light weights in the Colwick hunt. He had been an associate of Byron and Tom Moore. The former, in reference to an evening they had enjoyed together, writes, "That d——d supper at Rancliffe's, which ought to have been a dinner, has knocked me up for twenty-four hours."

Colonel Rolleston, who for some time represented South Notts, at a period very late in life was still known for an immense predilection for the society of very young ladies — that is, "from sweet 15" upwards. One day he was jocosely reminded of this, when he frankly replied, "I am fond of their society; it *is* so refreshing."

I shall never forget the anger of a lady—stout, fat, full, and over forty—who was vigorously lamenting to me the fate of her elder brother, who had united himself to a bride of seventeen—"It was *so* silly of a man at his age to marry a pretty girl of whom he was old enough to be her grandfather."

Having received this intelligence with extreme gravity, I remarked, in reply—"I always thought my friend, your brother, a very sensible man."

"And so he is," she cried, "save in this instance of marrying this young girl; he is a great fool now."

"He'd have been a greater," I replied, "if he had married an *old* girl."

"Mr. Sherwin of Bramcote," now, I think, "Sherwin Gregory of Marlaxton Manor," hunted a good deal with Musters. Also Bruce Campbell, Bennett and Henry Martin, Whitaker Ramsden Ichabod Charles Knight, who translated "Dante" and "The Iliad," and was the author of other works.

My dear friend Jack had four sons and two daughters, none of whom I ever knew. The elder died at Southampton; William, the second, is, I believe, rector of Colwick, and Henry is living in Ireland. The youngest, Charles, when a midshipman, died abroad. A grandson of Mr. Musters still, I am happy to say, hunts his own hounds in Nottinghamshire; and though he is unknown to me, for the sake of his grandfather, as well as the family name and his own sake also, long may he happily continue so to do!

I remember an old lady, a "Miss Musters," when I was quite a child, as having arrived on a visit to my father and mother at Berkeley Castle. She was accompanied by her black tan terrier, called "Tanner," who followed her wherever she went. What relation she was to my friend Jack Musters, if any, I never heard.

As a boy I grew to reverence the hard riding, handsome, athletic sportsman, and thorough gentleman, of whom I heard my elders speak, and who, in the field and wood, and by the river, I hoped one day to emulate; and as a man in the later years of his life, I loved him for his good-humour, kindness of

heart, and for the delight he still took in every species of sport.

Musters' manners in the drawing-room were as refined as those of any man of his day, and he was singularly successful in that most delightful society of all—that of the ladies.

The last sporting adventure at which I met Jack Musters, was at a main of cocks fought by my brothers and myself against the late Sir George Dashwood, at Cranford. Never shall I forget the intense amusement of my friend when I pointed out to him a rather tall, dingy figure, in black coat and waistcoat, kerseymeres, and brown top-boots, all looking as if they had seen much wear and tear, or had never been brushed nor blackened. The elderly gentleman was very busy taking his game-cocks out of their bags, which he had sent to fight on our side. Musters was intently watching him, and when the first cock was taken out of his bag, he asked—"What the devil is that parcel tied to one of the legs of the bird?"

"The battle-money of the individual who wears it at his foot," I replied; "my revered friend always stands his own battle-money in preference to standing any share of our main, and generally by so doing loses, for his birds are not so good as ours."

"Your revered friend," he remarked, eyeing me with that well-known clear glance of bantering inquiry, so good-natured, so funny, and yet so keen and handsome in its expression; "What do you call him *your* revered friend for?"

"Because he is a highly respectable and beneficed clergyman."

Musters burst into such a fit of laughter that he set twenty-one cocks crowing and flapping their wings in the excitement of the sudden noise he made.

Farewell to my handsome, athletic friend, that capital sportsman, the late Jack Musters of Colwick Hall. The writing of this notice of him has made me melancholy. From our having many things in common, from our mutual love of sport and in some instances similarity of personal prowess, and from our having frequented similar wild woodlands, fields, and rivers in different counties, I cannot but reflect that I still enjoy the same sensations, the same buoyant spirits and elastic step which used to be his when stepping from the portal of Colwick, either in the midst of the sweet burst of the buds in spring, in the full splendour of glorious summer, or when the mild sigh of the soft south wind met his cheek as he looked from his window in the morning, to see if the icy grasp of winter was about to open the kennel and stable-door.

While I write these lines in the beginning of April, 1865, the first really warm spring day is on and around me, and, thinking of Musters, I too remember when, with my kennel and stable at Harrold Hall splendidly filled with 20 good horses and 60 couples of fox-hounds, I went to stroll down to the deep, still "Ouse," rod in hand, and without having intended to do so, undressed and bathed in, and swam the river

to get on the other side. There, without me, in those still loved meadows yet flourish the brilliant flowers of the marsh "Mallow." In those fine woods, the same spot still bears the clustering primrose that used to waft its incense to my senses, and there are yet the descendants of the same breed of stout wild foxes it was to me such a delight to outwit and to bring to hand. I think of those bygone scenes, and wish that they were with me now, my heart as light, my step as free, and my means as ample as they were in the days before tyranny and persecution had driven my stud from the stall.

At Colwick all the pleasurable things to which I have referred once surrounded my gay, joyous, healthful and stalwart friend, no longer in their midst, and I can, in my mind's eye, see him in every phase of his sportsman's life, hear his high cheer to his hounds, and follow him throughout all his amusements.

It is now nearly, or quite, sixty years since Jack Musters made himself so gallantly conspicuous in hunting up as well as thrashing the "Luddite" rioters; and it was about that time that he rode a race against—certainly by the sequel—a very "fast" lady, the wife of Colonel Hawker, resident at Sherwood Lodge. The match was that they were to ride from Sherwood Lodge to Annesley Park, a distance of about four miles, the lady by the road and Jack Musters across the country. Mrs. Hawker arrived at Annesley first, and won the race.

I have been told that he was one day going

through Nottingham market, and came suddenly on some sugar-casks set in a row, into every one of which he successively jumped in and out, without upsetting a cask, or coming to a mistake of any kind, much to the astonishment of the bystanders, who, from this display of power, were induced to deem the young Squire would be a very awkward customer in a quarrel.

He was not personally vain—by which I mean he was neither a dandy nor a coxcomb—but for all that he prided himself on some things, and was pleased with admiration, especially as regarded his personal prowess. One of the old tenants on the estate at Annesley had recent notice to quit his farm on account of its bad culture. The man, Houghton by name, not liking, under the circumstances, to face the Squire, requested his brother to petition for leave to continue on the land; the brother replied, with much confidence, that he was "up to making it all right with the Squire." Under this opinion he proceeded to Annesley, and requested an interview; but Musters refused to grant it. In about three weeks' time Houghton went again, when, on being perceived from the window, the Squire refused to let him in, swore at him, and told him "to be off about his business." Nothing daunted, Houghton, in about a week's time, returned to the charge, and when he called, a servant came and ordered him up into the Squire's presence. It was with some expectation of being threshed and kicked downstairs that Houghton now came into the room; but resolving to get in the first word,

on what he knew to be the Squire's weak point, instead of at once blurting out the real matter in hand, he exclaimed, before he was well in at the door, "Please'y, Squire, my son and I have had a bet loik, about them sugar-casks. What was the depth and soize loik of they casks as 'y jumped in and out of, in our market-place?"

The hit told, and instead of rough words or a kick downstairs, brandy and water was immediately ordered to be brought in to refresh the crafty politician. At the close of their conversation, the Squire added—"Well, I suppose that idle, rascally brother of yours must stay on his farm; you may tell him so. Good-bye!"

CHAPTER III.

THE DANDIES AND THEIR KING.

Fops' Alley—Dandies—Brummell and the Prince of Wales—The long-tailed coat and cravat—Full dress in the time of the Regency—Prince Esterhazy—Lord Alvanley—Lord Yarmouth—Lord Fyfe—Lady Harrowby—Ladies Mary and Susan Ryder—The Duchess of Argyll and the Ladies Campbell—Lady Stafford and Lady Elizabeth Gower—Princess Esterhazy and the Baroness de Lieven—Lady Cardigan—Michael Angelo Taylor and Sir Lumley Skeffington—Sir John Lade—The Duke of Dorset and Lord Morton—Brummell's valet and the fashionable tradesman—Hamlet—Smith and Dutch pictures—Beau Brummell's levée—Lord Wilton—Fashionable quizzing.

In a former volume, I have glanced at a phase of society of which I heard and saw much in my youth, but the impression it made, quite as much as its singularity, demands a more careful record now that no trace of it remains, except a certain passage in the pit of the Opera House in the Haymarket, long honoured as the evening rendezvous of the principal personages who figured in it most prominently.

This was a small circle of Lords and Gentlemen, who were considered to lead the fashion in dress. They were not remarkable for talent, individually or collectively; and they did not cultivate any particular branch of human learning, their studies being sartorial rather than intellectual. They were forward

in coats and cravats, were well up in shirt collars, could have passed a most creditable examination in that most exact science—the art of making a tie for a neck-cloth, were advanced in pantaloons, erudite in cambric shirt fronts and fancy waistcoats, and familiar with the best models of gloves, silk stockings, boots and pumps.

I am astonished when I look back on the influence this oligarchy exerted over English aristocratic society, and at the absolute sway which their leader exercised there. Several of them belonged to distinguished families in the peerage, therefore for their rise to eminence it is not so difficult to account; but the man they delighted to consider their chief, their autocrat, their oracle and model, had no family connexions, no recommendations of fortune, no intellectual superiority, nor any remarkable personal advantages. He had no claim to noble, and but disputable pretensions to gentle blood, nevertheless his principal associates were the heir-apparent to the throne and the first nobles of the land, and he possessed more social or fashionable influence than all his followers.

Such were "the dandies" who then flourished in the London fashionable world, and such was their king. Of town exquisites there had been from time immemorial an ample supply—they had distinguished themselves in almost every reign by extravagance in dress and affectation of manner. Though now familiar only to the historical scholar, the fops of Richard II., of Henry V., of Edward IV., of Henry VIII., of Queen Elizabeth, of Charles II., and of Queen Anne,

like the Maccaroni of George III., were distinct types of national character, that still live in the squibs of the satirical poet and the caricatures of the contemporary artist.

Individuals have appeared from time to time who have attained a large amount of social celebrity, solely by their successful attempts to become "the glass of fashion and the mould of form—the observed of all observers." Beau Fielding and Beau Nash contrived to establish for themselves a durable reputation, while private worth and public service had to be content with a fame that survived them only on the tomb-stone.

It was left for the son of an upper servant to eclipse all previous adventurers in the same direction. In the chief places of public resort a young man appeared who attracted general attention by his extremely fashionable appearance. Inquiries were made about him by persons of the highest distinction of both sexes, but they only elicited that his name was Brummell, and that he was a private person of small fortune. His taste in dress and refined manners became the talk of the most exclusive circles, and it shortly began to be an object with the leaders of fashion to invite him to their parties.

The Prince of Wales, whose ambition it was to be considered the first gentleman in Europe, sent for him, and almost immediately took such a liking to his society that they became apparently inseparable associates. This increased his popularity to such an extent that all the young men of fortune or family about

town became anxious to be admitted into the circle of his intimate friends, and the ladies, even the beauties of the time, entered into a rivalry for his attentions.

The result of this favour was presently seen in a marked change in the ordinary costume of gentlemen. The Prince and his Royal Highness's most intimate associates formed themselves into a Council of Taste, of which Mr. Brummell was unanimously elected president, and calling in the assistance of a much-favoured tailor, they first of all remodelled the dress-coat. My very clever artificer, Mr. Poole, would laugh at the high collar, the queer waist, and the long tails of this once model garment, yet, when completed, it threw my former and first tailor, Mr. Weston, into ecstacies, and on its appearance in public created a sensation equal to Waterloo.

This *chef-d'œuvre* of the sartorial skill of the Prince and his colleagues had scarcely been adopted, when Mr. Brummell was required to do as much for the cravat. He at once gave the subject the profound attention it deserved, and in place of the ungraceful loose swathing that had previously been a bandage to the neck, rather than an ornament, came the neat stiff fold or spread cascade, with its elaborate tie and pin or brooch, that has since been supplanted by our present coloured ribbon and its cross tie.

If the coat was thought a marvel, the cravat was considered a miracle. How the muslin had been made to retain its place so admirably, nobody knew. Writing-paper, buckram, and other stiffening devices

had hitherto been adopted, but without anything like the result now obtained. There was a secret in the preparation the wisest in vain sought to penetrate. The mystery was getting intolerable. It was solved when the now truly great man benevolently whispered into the ear of one of his devoted followers the monosyllable "Starch."

Further improvements were made by the bold reformer, to the intense admiration of his royal patron and his aristocratic disciples; trousers became tight pantaloons, and the full-dress evening costume was shorts, with long silk stockings. I used to don buff shorts, to match the lining of the Prince Regent's uniform, a gracious permission to wear which he had given me. The shirt collar was elevated nearly to the ears, and the shirt in front had the addition of a frill. Other innovations followed from time to time, till at last the dress of an exquisite of the Regency reached its climax.

Amusing exaggerations of its absurdities are to be found amongst the early works of Cruikshank, to which the reader is referred. However absurd some of these improvements may appear to modern eyes, they were not only readily adopted then by persons of distinction, but there was a tendency exhibited by several amateurs of fashion to rival each other in their adaptation of them, which produced the extravagances immortalized by our clever artist.

Beau Brummell became a social deity of the first-class—a mild kind of Jupiter Tonans, whose smile conferred felicity, and whose nod was the most covet-

able of human honours. By universal consent he was raised to the throne of Fashion; by the chroniclers of *bon ton* he was acknowledged "King of the Dandies."

To gain anything like an adequate idea of the devotion of his subjects, the reader ought to have seen him in the public promenades and assemblies surrounded and looked up to by the noblest of his contemporaries. He might be frequently met with riding with the Prince of Wales in Hyde Park, or lounging in St. James's Street with Prince Esterhazy, who was almost as prominent a figure in the fashionable world. Lord Alvanley, Lord Yarmouth, Lord Fyfe, and the rest of that most select company of dandies, were sure of being found at a certain hour between "White's Club" and the shop of Weston, Brummell's tailor, in Bond Street.

Surely the admiration of "Shakspeare's Caliban" for the "poor drunkard" is the only parallel passage in the history of folly to match this mad approbation of a servant's son.

In "Fops' Alley" of an opera night, the beau was not only an example but a study. What was thought of Catalani was a secondary consideration to the *habitués*—the general idea being, "How well 'got up' is Brummell!" Even the handsome women in the grand tier glanced in his direction much more frequently than they looked on the stage, and the youthful débutantes were quite as anxious for his notice as their chaperones.

There were then, and later, families of beauties in which the mamma was almost worthy of being re-

garded as a rival to her blooming daughters. Successors to the Duchess of Gordon and her once unrivalled progeny were seen in the Lady Harrowby and the Ladies Mary and Susan Ryder, the Duchess of Argyll, and the Ladies Campbell, the Lady Stafford, and Lady Elizabeth Gower.

From the boxes owned by the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors might be seen the distinguished toilettes and handsome persons of the Princess Esterhazy and the more imperious Countess de Lieven, the agreeable Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, probably in attendance on one of them. Another disclosed the lovely face of Lady Cardigan, directing her bright glance towards the pit, under the guidance of her brother, well known about town as "Kangaroo Cooke," but a much more important personage at the Horse Guards. His moustache at that time denoted his profession, but with the rank of Colonel he held the appointment of Secretary and Aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief.

A little further off were visible the florid complexion and white hair of that luxuriant Crœsus, Michael Angelo Taylor, M.P., apparently questioning a slight figure who sat beside him, one of the dandies of that generation, Sir Lumley Skeffington, long a hanger-on in green-rooms in consequence of his having written the favourite after-piece, "The Sleeping Beauty."

In the immediate vicinity of the great man clustered a galaxy of lesser stars that desired to illumine the horizon of the *beau monde*. Such were the Hon. George Dawson Damer, Lord Foley, or No. 11, as he was called, from the thin shape of his legs, Henry

Pierrepoint, Wellesley Pole, Charles Standish, Henry Ashton, Tom Raikes, and George Henry Drummond. Their extravagance had not been confined to dress, and more than one had advanced nearly to the end of that grand highway of fashionable life which leads to ruin.

Beau Brummell sometimes condescended to help them on their way; and after honouring the best provided with his notice in Fops' Alley, occasionally finished the evening at their expense at the club. He was generally lucky at cards; on one ocasion he is said to have risen a winner of 20,000*l.*

But the place to see this autocrat of fashion to the most advantage, was during his *levée* at his apartment in Chapel Street, May Fair, which, with the assistance of his subjects of both sexes, the King of the Dandies had fitted up in a style of elegance that ought to have satisfied the most fastidious taste of that day. The taste of that day, however, could scarcely be deemed fastidious, compared with the more refined taste of domestic decoration that marks the present.

While these follies of fashion were in their height, I was too young to be mixed up in them, and latterly, when they were dying away, I was too much wedded to the sports of the field to care for staying in London, save when my duties, as an officer of the Coldstream Guards, required my presence. Nevertheless, I became possessed of a great deal of such information through the communications of certain of my seniors at the mess, at fashionable clubs, and in well-frequented town and country houses.

The following sketch of Brummell's head-quarters

was narrated to me by a noble friend of mine, now no more, who tried, as a very young man, to make the Beau's acquaintance.

"In Chapel Street, near the house, might be seen the four-in-hand of Sir John Lade being driven from it by that veteran charioteer. He sat in his high place, in a white small cape and overcoat, his somewhat simple, somewhat good-natured countenance apparently striving to look content at the prospect of an investment he had just made in the nature of a loan. He was aware that he might never see the principal again, yet fancied that it would be certain to bring him interest, though not in current coin.

"It would have appeared strange to most people how the lender reconciled himself to this contingency, as the current coin was the very thing of which he was beginning to find himself deficient, but then they did not know the kind of fascination which a reputation for directing royal favours gave to the borrower. Sir John flicked his whip, and chirruped to his leaders as content as a capitalist who had effected an investment certain to return him a hundred per cent.

"There too were the Duke of Dorset on his white horse, and Lord Morton on his swish-tailed grey, talking earnestly with a tall, well-dressed man, standing without a hat upon the curb-stone. He bowed very low as the Duke and my Lord rode off, and returned to the house through a double row of footmen in fine liveries, who appeared to be lounging on the step. They made way for him with a show of deference, and he spoke condescendingly to one or two in a manner that clearly indicated his position.

"He turned round," my friend continued, "as I entered the passage after him, and, favouring me with a scrutinizing glance from head to foot, smiled, and bowed with impressive civility.

"'You come to see my master,' he said, looking benevolently into my flushed face; 'and very right, sir. Everybody comes to see my master—at least, everybody who is anybody, and there is no difficulty in deciding on *your* pretensions. Sir, may I have the honour of announcing your name to Mr. Brummell?'

"I presented him with my card and a gold seven-shilling piece, then a favourite tip for upper servants.

"'A thousand thanks. I thought I could not be deceived in your appearance, sir.'

"And the well-dressed valet regarded me as a Howard might have gazed on one who had established the highest possible claim on his good offices.

"'Always ask for Watson, sir, when you come to Mr. Brummell,' he added, confidentially. 'I am generally in the house, and shall be proud to do you any service in my power. Master has been much engaged this morning; but then, to be sure, he is much engaged every morning. He is the greatest man in the world, sir, and has it in his power to do great things for his friends. Persons who have fortunes to make come to him as a matter of course. Besides,' he whispered, 'being the most distinguished man at court, he is enabled to procure distinction for those who, though well off in other respects, cannot

find their way to it without help. Mr. Brummell takes them by the hand, and the thing is done.

"'I shall be obliged to leave you in the waiting-room for a time,' he continued, addressing the new comer in a low voice. 'I must apologize for placing you with tradespeople, but master is particularly engaged with the Marchioness of Hertford's major domo about some fête her ladyship is going to give the Prince. These ladies of fashion can absolutely do nothing without him, sir. I assure you, sir, from the marriage of their daughters to the dismissal of their cooks, they *must* have his advice.'

"I had made no attempt to controvert this confidential opinion," continued my informant, "when I found myself in a large parlour pretty nearly filled with comfortable-looking men, mostly somewhat advanced in life. Some wore pig-tails and powder, though both were going out of fashion, a few brown scratch wigs, and several had shining, bald, fat heads, port-wine complexions, and aldermanic corporations. Blue coats with gilt buttons, buff waistcoats, and kerseymere pantaloons and boots were worn by the smartest. Some preferred breeches, gaiters, shoes and stockings, with a brown coat, but no one affected the gentleman in his manner or appearance.

"As soon as Mr. Brummell's valet entered the room with me, he was hailed by at least a dozen cordial voices from as many of the company, all of whom hastily moved towards him with the particularly eager look of clients deeply interested in the despatch of what was no doubt very 'urgent private

affairs.' One stout, old, churchwarden-looking personage in a brown suit, with gaiters, and a powdered head with a pig-tail, contrived to fasten on him before the others could come up.

"'Now, Mr. Hamlet,' exclaimed my new acquaintance, with even more of the patronizing manner than he had shown towards myself, 'you really must take into consideration the innumerable and pressing claims there are upon my master. You have been waiting an hour, you say, but it is clearly impossible that Mr. Brummell can dismiss half the peerage in that time, to say nothing of the Royal Family. You wish to know about the service of plate for my Lord Wilton, and my Lady Jersey's diamonds, and the large wine-cooler for the Duke of York, and my Lord Petersham's gold dressing-case. Very right. Such important matters,' he added, with a confident smile, 'must not be proceeded with without master's sanction, or you would be sure to lose his favour. And that isn't, you know, likely to meet with an equivalent in this world. But patience, Mr. Hamlet. My master can't attend to everybody's affairs at once, and the nobility and gentry always must have precedence with him.'

"The applicant was the then well-known gold and silver-smith. His brilliant shop at the corner of St. Martin's Court was a favourite lounge for young men of fortune, his snug back-parlour, almost surrounded by its iron safes built into the wall, a familiar resort of young men of great expectations. His daughter was regarded as one of the richest heiresses in

London, and his ledger contained an enormous list of liabilities of people of the first rank and fashion."

I knew that the heiress had had a narrow escape of that prodigal, Wellesley Pole, who was rapidly squandering the fortune he had received from another fair lady, but I did not know how heavily the Prince Regent and the Duke of York were in her father's debt, and was very far indeed from foreseeing the total ruin that overtook the reputed millionaire when he found himself unable to recover on the bonds of his royal debtors.

"My interest," my friend went on to say, "in that once princely merchant could not be long maintained, for he fell back as another eager applicant for favour pounced upon the valet. He was a little man, in a Brutus wig, with sharp though intelligent features, and cleanly-shaved face. His costume was of an old fashion, though not unfrequent, in which a long-tailed coat, knee-breeches, and top boots were the most prominent features.

"'Really, Mr. Smith,' exclaimed the valet, in a tone of remonstrance, 'do be reasonable. You've come about those pictures that were sent to Carlton House on approval—sent a month ago, were they? Well, what then? You cannot have the most remote conception how many things are forwarded to his Royal Highness for his inspection. Mr. Brummell does all he can with the Prince, but it's utterly impossible for him to direct his Royal Highness's attention to everything all at once. But if the Prince has not seen the paintings, *I* have, and I must

say I think the artist has made a very great mistake in painting them, and the owner one quite as prominent in sending them to a connoisseur of such refined taste as the Prince Regent. How? you ask. I will tell you. They seem to be all representations of boors drinking, dancing, feasting—in short, very vulgar people enjoying themselves in a very vulgar way. They are Dutch, you say. I don't see how that mends the matter. If the pictures had been high Dutch, their subjects might have been more genteel; but they are low Dutch, and *very* low Dutch, in my thinking. Now I don't see how any gentleman of taste, let alone the first gentleman in Europe, could permit such horrid public-house scenes to be hung up in his private apartments, to be gazed on by ladies of quality in court dresses, peers of the realm in their robes, perhaps bishops in their canonicals. I should think they would turn away from such degrading representations—I should, indeed, Mr. Smith.

"You assure me that they are much prized abroad, and are to be found in the cabinets of kings. You sold several to the Emperor of Russia, did you? All that I can say then is, foreigners have queer fancies; and if such a taste prevails in the Courts abroad, it must have been brought into them in those terrible revolutionary times when the merest tag-rag ruled in the palaces. As for the Emperor Alexander, though he looks a gentleman, everybody knows that all Russians are barbarians. I don't wonder at his

liking such things. Some of his countrymen, when over here, exhibited a taste for train oil.

"'Mr. Smith, I will give you a hint. Everything French now is considered genteel. We have fashions from Paris direct, and I don't see why we shouldn't get pictures. There is a very pretty artist, who, a good many years before that horrid revolution, was the court painter. He painted rural scenes most charmingly, for all his shepherds and shepherdesses were unmistakeably dukes and duchesses. He never descended to ugly old women scouring brass pans or peeling turnips; to drunken old men snoring, with empty beer-pots beside them; or leering like consumptive goats at a coarse wench, who gives one the stomach-ache to look at. No, Mr. Smith; his women are fair and young; are dressed completely *à la mode*, and look so fashionable you can tell at a glance that the dairymaid is a princess, and the female with the sheep a maid of honour at the least. As for the rustic with the pipe and tabor, he can be nothing less than a prince of the blood; and the rural swains so elegantly assisting their partner through the figure of that graceful dance, are officers of the Guards without a doubt.

"'*That's* what I call the kind of pictures for the walls of a palace. Were I a patron of the fine arts, Mr. Smith, I would only encourage those painters who possessed a genteel taste. My favourite subject should always be the nobility and gentry, and I would insist on their painting nothing else.'"

The picture dealer seemed more amused than displeased with this denunciation of his invaluable Ostades, Tenierses, Brauerses, &c. &c.; and no one in the room ventured to put forward an opinion in opposition to that of Mr. Brummell's gentleman, who, in their eyes, was only a degree less potential in matters of taste than his master. All were ready to endorse his decision; at least all who had not Dutch cabinet pictures to sell, and most of them indulged in laughing comments at the expense of their brother tradesman.

Watson was next caught hold of by an elderly man, of grave deportment, serious enough for an undertaker, solemn enough for a judge. His clothes were of the citizen cut, and his appearance clearly indicative of citizen respectability. This person got the valet up in a corner, and in a very low voice urged something that was evidently of considerable importance. What it was could not be overheard; but it appeared from the answers that were now and then audible, that the man was a silversmith on Ludgate Hill, largely engaged, like Hamlet, in the business of a money-lender; a business, however, that beggared him long before it ruined his rival.

Mr. Watson's assurances, apologies, and remonstrances, I was assured, were quite as copious as in the former cases, and were equally efficacious. The respectable-looking usurer, finding that there was nothing to be got by bothering the valet respecting certain overdue bills for which he wanted payment,

either of Mr. Brummell or of Mr. Brummell's particular friends, quietly slunk back into the crowd.

Others eagerly took his place. Some had articles of *vertu* to dispose of; some jewels worthy of a duchess; some specimens of clothing of a new pattern or material, fit for a prince. There were fashionable tailors, bootmakers, tobacconists, coachmakers, and upholsterers — all aspiring after Mr. Brummell's patronage, and all seeing in his recommendation a short cut to fortune. To each of these the valet addressed apologies, explanations, and promises, that exercised a beneficial influence over their impatience, and, one after another, each fell back a little better reconciled to wait his turn for presentation.

"Now, sir," whispered Watson, confidentially into my friend's ear, as he passed hurriedly towards the door.

"It's difficult to keep those fellows within bounds," he observed in a low voice, jerking his thumb in the direction of the room he had left. "They are as eager in hunting master as a pack of beagles after a hare. If they make anything, from a new carriage to a new snuff, they wont rest a moment till they have brought it under the notice of Mr. Brummell, and that is as good to them as if the whole world knew it.

"Come this way, sir, if you please," he added, "master must be disengaged by this time, and I will announce you at once."

My friend followed up a richly carpeted flight of

stairs, to the door of a back drawing-room, which the other opened, and announced the visitor's name. He entered a luxuriously-furnished dressing-room full of magnificent mirrors. But the first object that attracted his attention was the person of the illustrious beau, seated in a low arm-chair, in a muslin dressing-gown, having his hair dressed by a tall fellow in a white apron, with deep pockets, who he readily recognised as the principal *coiffeur* at the West End. The man bowed, but proceeded with his important duty without hazarding a word.

Mr. Brummell inclined his head very slightly to the bow of introduction, but that was all the notice he seemed disposed to take of his visitor.

"Aw—well, Watson," he said, in a somewhat drawling tone, addressing his valet, "what has arrived?"

"Three haunches of venison, four salmon, two turbots, one dressing-case, five lap-dogs, and an easy chair, sir!"

"Send the fish and the venison to Groves's. What is the use of presenting things to a man who has twenty invitations to dinner every day of his life? Aw—no—reserve the finest turbot and the finest salmon for my Lady Cholmondeley. Her ladyship gives a large dinner party to-night—so send at once, that the cook may have it early."

"Yes, sir."

"Aw—and tell Groves I shall expect the full allowance."

"Yes, sir."

"Aw—and the dressing-case and the easy chair

may also be sold. I have five easy chairs and three dressing-cases."

"And what's to be done with the lap-dogs, if you please, sir?"

"Aw—if there is a pug amongst them, send it to my Lady Cowper; if there's a King Charles, send it to my Lady Sefton; if there's a Blenheim, it must go to Mrs. Drummond Burrell. Aw—I don't know anybody else who requires anything of the kind; so the rest may be disposed of. Is there anything else?"

"Yes, sir; a box of French kid gloves, three pairs of worked slippers, a china christening bowl, a butt of Spanish wine, and a canister of Dutch snuff."

"Aw—put the gloves away for use. I've got a drawer full of slippers; I shall never be able to wear half of them. If the bowl is unusually large, reserve it for punch; the wine may be bottled if of superior quality; the snuff, if very good, may go to Lord Petersham and the Prince. Anything else?"

"My Lady Castlereagh sent to remind you that you are engaged to her dinner party; my Lord Conyngham called to leave word that you were on no account to forget the masquerade; Sir Benjamin Blomfield has left his Royal Highness's command for your attendance at the concert to-morrow evening; Sir John Lade drove up to inquire if you could breakfast with him any morning this week; and the Duke of Dorset and my Lord Moreton rode to the door to invite you to dinner on your first disengaged day."

"Aw—when is that likely to be? People are most unreasonable—every day they expect me to eat a dozen breakfasts, as many luncheons, at least a score of dinners, and to attend an unlimited number of concerts, masquerades, balls, private theatricals, *conversaziones*, and entertainments of every possible description. Aw—Sir Boyle Roche wished he was a bird to be in two places at once, but I'm required to do a great deal more than that. I'm requested to be at Mayfair and Carlton House; to be at Manchester-square and St. James's; to be at Grosvenor-place and Knightsbridge, and I know not how many more distant parts of town, where I am expected to have the digestion of an ostrich, the agility of a dervish, the loquacity of a parrot, and the constitution of a horse."

"And very right, sir!" exclaimed the valet, with the freedom of a favoured domestic; "ordinary people are only asked to do ordinary things, sir!—that you know, sir!—and that this gentleman knows, sir!—who, like so many thousands of the nobility and gentry, has come to pay his respects to you!"

Here the great man slightly nodded again, and my friend bowed in return.

"But a Brummell, sir, as everybody in the three kingdoms is aware, is an extraordinary person—I may say a very extraordinary person, sir!—therefore what so natural as the general expectation that he should do extraordinary things?"

"Aw, yes; but not impossible things, my good fellow. But did anybody else call?"

"His Highness the Prince Esterhazy, the most noble the Marquis of Cholmondeley, and my Lords Fyfe, Wilton, Petersham, Alvanley, and Yarmouth."

"I wished to have seen them, Watson."

"So I thought, sir—and asked them into the drawing-room, where they have been waiting this half hour."

"You have done, Le Fleur?"

"Yes, sare. The hair of your head is superbe—it is ravishing!"

The beau turned and looked at the effect in the glass, with a very critical gaze; the hairdresser and the valet examining it at the same time with the most intense gratification. My friend regarded the scene with all the interest of an amateur, almost afraid to exercise the privilege of amateurship, oppressed by what he saw.

"My coat—my morning coat, of course."

The Frenchman tenderly took off the dressing-gown, and delicately hung it on a peg at the back of the door, while the valet brought the required garment, which he helped on with the air of serious concern that might be expected from a person holding so responsible an office as the confidential attendant of so renowned a potentate. It fitted to a hair—there was not a speck of dust nor a crease on the cloth.

The beau looked long and searchingly into the glass, adjusted his cravat, turned round to see the fit of his frock coat, pulled up his stiff shirt collar, smoothed the folds of his waistcoat, and carefully examined his trousers and boots.

"Aw—I think I shall do," he said.

"You never looked better, sir, and that is saying a great deal," observed the valet, with an air of profound satisfaction.

"Monsieur shall excel himself," and the hairdresser fell back a pace or two, clasping his hands, and looking exceedingly happy.

"What do *you* think, sir?" said the beau, suddenly addressing his visitor for the first time.

"There cannot be two opinions about it, Mr. Brummell," was the reply. "If you are not the best got-up gentleman in his Majesty's dominions, I should like to know who is."

"Come along with me," cried the great man, apparently well pleased, and taking him by the arm in a friendly way, led him into the next room, where my friend presently found himself in the company of six of the most fashionable men of the day.

"Aw—delighted to see you, Prince—charmed to see you all, by G—d!"

"How are you, Brummell?" and other conventional greetings were said in the way of reply, every one directing his exclusive attention to his host—and one appearing to be aware of the presence of the stranger.

They were all dressed after one pattern, but there were some slight variations. Lord Wilton wore a fur collar to his frogged surtout; Lord Yarmouth a long cravat. All carried walking-sticks except Prince Hoare, who held a riding-whip. They wore stiff turned up collars, and full trousers, showing the boot

at the instep fastened with straps. The Prince was scarcely to be distinguished from a well-dressed private English gentleman, except on state occasions, when his display threw that of the greatest magnificos into the shade.

Lord Alvanley's stout proportions and round face, with its little nose, immediately attracted my friend's attention. From him he glanced to the tall figure and smiling features of Lord Petersham. The others, in turn, came in for a full share of his scrutiny.

They had been talking languidly, and presently resumed their conversation when the greeting was over. It was some scandalous gossip then rife at the clubs respecting the Princess of Wales; and what most amused the new comer was the teutonic English of the Prince, the Scottish accent of Lord Fyfe, and the affected drawl of the others, who, however, said very little; nor was that modicum particularly worth preservation, except as a specimen of the fashionable small talk current nearly fifty years ago.

These exclusives did not pride themselves on the variety of their ideas—their thoughts like their clothes seeming to be of one pattern. Indeed there was so close a resemblance in the fashion of their hair, whiskers, and general appearance, the stiffness of the figure, and the smallness of the waist, that they might easily have been mistaken for so many reflections of the same model—the constant recurrence to the universal snuff-box of Petersham assisted in producing this illusion.

The conversation was presently left entirely to Prince

Esterhazy and Mr. Brummell, who discussed the foreign news of the day, the rest apparently having exhausted their conversational powers, and as my friend was listening with a good deal of interest to the Prince's remarks, on turning his head he discovered that each of the other dandies, with a glass at his right eye, was intently scrutinizing his personal appearance. When they became aware that they were observed, the tightly-laced exquisites suddenly wheeled about, and were in the next moment attentively regarding the nearest picture on the wall. None of them knew him, for he had been on the continent for some years.

My friend's attention was again absorbed by the conversation. In a few minutes he turned once more, and again noticed the dandies clustered about, gazing on his person with as much wondering curiosity as so many learned *savants* might have exhibited at suddenly having presented to them a wild specimen of the genus *homo* of an entirely new species. They rapidly moved away, and began to look at other things as soon as they found they had attracted the stranger's observation.

He had, he said, taken especial pains to be well-dressed, when he made up his mind to attend the levée of such a connoisseur in personal decoration, and the beau's friendly manner of bringing him amongst the most select of his little court had not only particularly gratified him, but put him entirely at his ease. Noticing, however, the singular behaviour of his companions, he could not help feeling rather annoyed, as well as somewhat alarmed.

"Remember," continued my friend, "that my career as a man of fashion had scarcely commenced. I was but a youth. I felt a morbid anxiety growing upon me that now shaped itself into a fear that I had committed some egregious blunder while making my toilet, and at once grew very red and uncomfortable.

"I speedily moved to another part of the room, and tried to quiet my disturbed thoughts by an examination of some rare Dresden on a side table. From this I was presently aroused by an exclamation of surprise from my host, and looking towards him had the satisfaction of perceiving that he and Prince Esterhazy were intently observing me through their eye-glasses, the rest of the company doing the same thing, and that he looked with an expression of mingled concern and amazement.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, advancing nearer to me, with his glass to his eye, the others following his example. "Aw, where did you pick up that extraordinary affair you have put on your back. I protest I never saw anything so singular."

"Most singular, indeed," cried Lord Yarmouth.

"May be it's a heir-loom?" suggested Lord Fyfe.

"Coeval with Alfred the Great, at least," observed Lord Alvanley.

"Exactly!" said Lord Wilton.

"Exactly," echoed another.

The Prince laughed good-humouredly, as he added, "It is not your fault, mine goot sir. You shall not be to blame, because a devoid-of-conscience-in-

fluencing tradesman deceives you when you do him the honour to purchase of him his delusive fabrics."

"Is there anything the matter with the coat?" my friend inquired, in a dreadful state of confusion.

"*Coat!*" exclaimed Beau Brummell.

"*Coat!*" cried his friends in chorus, all in extreme astonishment.

"For heaven's sake, sir, don't misapply names so abominably!" cried the host himself, and everyone continuing to scrutinize the garment; "it's no more like a coat than it's like a cauliflower—if it is, I'll be d——d."

There was a mild laugh which annoyed the young amateur of fashion more than the extravagant commentary; and he was meditating a hasty retreat from his unpleasant position—indignant with what he considered unwarrantable criticism—when the door suddenly opened, and the valet announced some very great lady whose name I have forgotten.

"I was piqued, perhaps," continued my friend, "for they must have known whose son I was, and the rank, too, to which one day or other I must attain; the interview, however, had the wholesome effect of curing me of dandyism; and though, as you know, I was a smart man-about-town, I thought more of politics, sport of all kinds, and hunting and racing than of the fripperies of useless folly."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BYRON CIRCLE.

Points of resemblance—Lord Byron, and Jackson, my master in "self-defence"—Our rows with "clods"—Mary Anne Chaworth—Indications of first love—Miss Chaworth's preference for Musters—Byron's disappointment—His first meeting with her after her marriage—"Maid of Athens"—Stanzas in "Childe Harold"—Lady Caroline Lamb—"Cheek Chaworth" and Byron sharing deep potations—Miseries of separation—Rejection and acceptance by Miss Milbanke—His marriage—State of his feelings—Lady Byron's desertion—Shelley and Byron at Geneva and in Italy—Shelley drowned in the Bay of Spezia—Byron in Greece—His death—Fate of Mary Anne Chaworth—Lady Byron and Ada—The Countess Guiccioli.

WHEN Byron and myself commenced our several careers, we had a good many tastes and feelings in common, however much we may have differed in other respects. Although never approaching his talent for poetry, I was fond as a youth of poetic versification, and often realized Shakspeare's idea of a lover with a woeful sonnet made to his mistress's eyebrow. In athletic amusements we had the same masters, and the veteran prize-fighter, but really gentlemanlike, clever, and agreeable man, Jackson, taught us both the art of self-defence. Byron thought a good deal of Jackson's opinion on all sporting subjects, and consulted him very frequently, as his correspondence will prove in the "Letters and Journals" published by Moore, in quarto, in 1830.

At Brompton cemetery there is Jackson's tomb, the figure of a classical athlete at each corner supporting it. It was raised to his memory by his surviving friends, in token of the high estimation in which he was held by many of the nobility and gentry of England.

In youth, though our days were some distance apart, Lord Byron and myself frequented the same localities—Bath and Cheltenham in particular—and got into much the same sort of rows with snobs.

> "Still I remember, in the factious strife,
> The rustic's musket aimed against my life;
> High poised in air the massy weapon hung,
> A cry of horror burst from every tongue:
> Whilst I in combat with another foe,
> Fought on unconscious of the impending blow,
> Your arm, brave boy, arrested his career—
> Forward you sprung, insensible to fear;
> Disarmed and baffled by your conquering hand,
> The grovelling savage rolled upon the sand."

I could chronicle many such encounters with "clods" at Cranford, and in other places, as this described by the poet as having occurred at Harrow. The friend who interposed for him so gallantly was young Tattersall. In our domestic relations, also, there existed a resemblance, which will be fully portrayed at the conclusion of this work.

Like myself, too, Lord Byron was fond of the neighbourhood of Annesley, which was in the vicinity of Newstead Abbey. The heiress of the estate was his first—indeed, I think I may say—his only real love. She was the Mary Ann Chaworth for whose

name all his myriad readers feel the most romantic interest, as there can be very little doubt that the cultivation of his affection for this amiable and beautiful girl, and its fruitless result, excited in him that profound feeling which led to his becoming the most popular poet of his age.

Of his entire devotion to her, enduring evidences remain in those passionate out-pourings of sentiment so familiar to us. Every association with her from the time of childhood, seems to have been dwelt upon by him as an incident of his existence pre-eminently worthy of remembrance. His laying at the bottom of a boat with her when crossing a stream in a Derbyshire cavern, his sitting—enforced by his infirmity—while she was led by a rival to the dance, and his hearing her say to her attendant, "Do you think I could care anything for that lame boy," formed the bright lights, the bitterness, and glowing shadows of what he himself styles "the romance of the most romantic period of my life."

But the secret of his failure is easily told. During the period of "the dream that was not all a dream," he was but a boy of fifteen or sixteen. A girl fast ripening into womanhood looks down with supreme contempt on so juvenile a suitor. Miss Chaworth considered herself a woman at eighteen, and naturally claimed the devotion of a full-grown man. She certainly found manhood enough in my friend Jack Musters, who was the object of her choice, and shortly afterwards carried her off, and with her her ample fortune.

It was when Byron learnt who was destined to be the happy man that he wrote in one of Miss Chaworth's books, before what was intended to be his last interview, the verses beginning—

> "Oh, memory, torture me no more,
> The Present's all o'ercast;
> My hopes of future bliss are o'er,
> In mercy veil the past."

But retrospection would return again and again during his Harrow and Cambridge career, as well as in the course of his subsequent travels. The image of the lovely heiress of Annesley presented its fair beauty, always bringing the unconsoling conviction that he might have lived a thoroughly happy life, and one without reproach, had fate and the girl of his heart been kind.

Some of my sentimental readers may regret that so fair a mate should have preferred the real to the ideal—the stalwart fox-hunter to the aristocratic poet—and may probably anticipate the repentance of such a choice.

Lord Byron went his way soured and disappointed at the very threshold of his life, and as a natural consequence became rather irregular in his habits at College, maintaining a tame bear, and at Brighton "a younger brother," who accompanied him *en cavalier*, but was known to be what the Chevalier D'Eon was *not*, when that adventurer passed as a lady.

When he published his first volume he met with my fate in raising a nest of hornets called critics;

they stung him into a fury, which brought on them a retaliation for which they were quite unprepared. Byron used his pen, while I used the whip, but double-thonged his assailants with imperishable satire. Humble, however, as the flagellation of my assailants was compared with "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," we both put an end—for a time—to savage attacks on amateur authors.

There was another similarity in our want of proper supervision during youth and adolescence. Lord Byron thus states his own case—

> "E'en I, least thinking of a thoughtless throng,
> Just skilled to know the right and choose the wrong;
> Freed at that age when Reason's shield is lost,
> To fight my course through Passion's countless host;
> Whom every path of Pleasure's flowery way
> Has lured in turn, and all have led astray," &c.

During the height of the popularity created by this stirring satire, and when arranging for his departure from England, Jack Musters, who had assumed the name of Chaworth, met the noble poet in the winter of 1808, and with characteristic frankness invited him to dinner. He accepted the invitation as frankly as it was offered; but the passion Lord Byron had nourished since, as he declared, he was ten years old, was too deep-rooted not to be powerfully affected by the presence of its cause. Under strong restraint he went to Annesley. "The lame boy," save the deformity in his foot, had become a graceful and prepossessing young man—more than this, he had begun to be talked about as a man of mark in his generation.

Mrs. Chaworth was well aware of his love, and might have felt a womanly interest in renewing her acquaintance with her old playmate; but the demonstration of feeling came from him.

He played indifference very well till a child of his Mary's was brought into the room where they were—he started, and tried hard to master his emotion. Either the mother's presence of mind, or absence of feeling, kept him from betraying himself, and during his stay his conduct was irreproachable.

Mrs. Chaworth asked him why he was going to quit England. The reply he then gave was probably matter of fact enough; but when he returned home he wrote the poem entitled "The Farewell to a Lady." In the original draft occurred this verse—

> "Thus, Mary, must it be to me,
> And I must view thy charms no more;
> For while I linger near to thee,
> I sigh for all I knew before."

She had evidently lost none of her attractions, and in her dear presence the old passion was returning with ten-fold force. He wrote about the same time those exquisite stanzas beginning, "Well—thou art happy;" the last verse tells its own tale—

> "'T would soothe to take one lingering view,
> And bless thee in my last adieu;
> Yet wish I not those eyes to weep
> For him who wanders o'er the deep;
> His home, his hope, his youth, are gone,
> Yet still he loves, and loves but one."

Lord Byron did not bid his "native land good-

night" till June, 1809. No sooner had he got amongst the seductive women of Spain than he seemed in a fair way of forgetting his first passion. To one inamorata he sings—

"Then think upon Calypso's Isles,
Endeared by days gone by,
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh."

He went on to classic Greece, and at the city of Minerva made the acquaintance of another beauty, Theresa Macri (daughter of the Vice-Consul), for whom he is said to have written the well-known song, "Maid of Athens, ere we part;" but which was really written to a mere child whom he used to teaze, and who was very plain—a fact I give on the authority of Sir Percy Shelley. The song, as is well known, has a Romaic *refrain*, and the Greek beauty has therefore enjoyed the fame of the inspiration.

My friend Lord Broughton, then Mr. Hobhouse, was the companion of the noble poet's travels. Byron was afterwards joined by Lord Sligo; subsequently made the acquaintance of that remarkable adventuress, Lady Hester Stanhope, and returned to England in July, 1811, to produce his wonderful poem, "Childe Harold." He still harped on the old subject—

"I've seen my bride another's bride—
Have seen her seated by his side—
Have seen the infant which she bore
Wear the sweet smile her mother wore,
When she and I in youth have smiled,
As fond and faultless as her child.

Have seen her eyes, in cold disdain,
Ask if I felt no secret pain;
And I have acted well my part,
And made my cheek belie my heart;
Returned the freezing glance she gave,
Yet felt the while that woman's slave.
Have kissed, as if without design,
The babe which ought to have been mine;
And showed, alas! in each caress,
Time had not made me love the less."

He went back to Newstead, and probably again to Annesley; when the coldness of the lady of his love appears to have given a desperate impulse to his muse, which broke out in many a passage, strongly marked by morbid gloom and agony of spirit. She had made him a poet, or as he phrased it, in some beautiful lines written at Athens—

"By the death-blow of my hope
My memory immortal grew."

Apparently, she cared not for the distinction she had gained, and was indifferent to his feelings, past or present. He was therefore obliged to rest as contented as his great discontent would permit, with the immense success which attended the publication of his new poem. He awoke one morning and found himself famous; but he was not loved, at least not by the woman he worshipped.

It is quite true that Lady Caroline Lamb distinguished herself by her devotion to the favourite of society, for whom her novel "Glenarvon" was composed, as an illustration of hero-worship. But even this grand passion did not console him for his

loss. He entertained a sincere regard for her, but the love was all on her side. It seems as if he, about this time, met at Middleton (Lord Jersey's seat), the husband of his Mary. According to this memorandum, "C * *, the fox-hunter, nicknamed 'Cheek * *,' and I sweated the claret, being the only two who did so. C * *, who loves his bottle, and has no notion of meeting with a *bon vivant* in a scribbler, in making my eulogy to somebody one evening, summed it up in—'By G——, he drinks like a man.'"

If this is meant for "Cheek Chaworth," he must have derived the *soubriquet* from the habit of making a liberal and emphatic use of strong language when put out. As a specimen I give the following:—"There goes that d—— parson," he roared, as a lame clergyman was quitting his presence. "He's as deformed in his mind as he is in his body. He always rides over the hounds. The devil wont have him at any price."

With regard to the poet's apparent excess in his company, he was in the habit of refreshing himself with soda-water and biscuit; and having heard that his host's sporting friend had spoken contemptuously of his weak tipple, Byron seized an early opportunity of showing him that he could take a manly share of stronger beverage when he chose.

I do not think that he ventured on another interview with Mrs. Chaworth. She had made it too apparent that she encouraged no sentimental predilections; and that her position as a wife and a mother caused her to ignore whatever claims he

might be supposed secretly to nourish as the admirer of her girlhood. He had erected for himself a great name through the influence of his unrequited affection, but this did not appear to have interested her particularly.

Probably he may have felt humiliated that the creature he had so glorified should have been satisfied with being the wife of a man, who, intellectually, was so complete a contrast to himself. Jack Musters cared nothing for poetry, and about as little for prose, always asserting that the only book he ever read since he left school was "Robinson Crusoe." But that I do not believe.

It was not till the summer of 1813 that Byron began to turn his attention seriously to matrimony; though the divinity that "shaped his ends" in that channel had merely excited a fugitive admiration, To the Deity of his youth he was as fervent in his devotions as ever; as may be seen from the tone of his thoughts in another popular poem, "The Giaour," published about this time, in which these lines occur—

> "She was a form of life and light,
> That seen became a part of sight,
> And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
> The morning-star of memory."

In November of the same year he acknowledges having commenced "Zuleika," to drive his thoughts from the recollection of "Dear sacred name rest ever unrevealed." "The Bride of Abydos," he says, was written in four nights with the same object.

"Had I not done something at that time," he adds, "I should have gone mad." He saw a young lady who greatly disturbed his mind, in consequence of her close resemblance to Mrs. Chaworth; an incident that sometimes happened, but never without leaving a painful impression, as the poet declared in "The Giaour"—

> "Earth holds no other like to thee,
> Or, if it doth, in vain for me:
> For worlds I dare not view the dame,
> Resembling thee, yet not the same."

In the same month an entry in his journal declares that he is "pondering on the miseries of separation." In the last day of the month there occurs his first reference to Miss Milbanke, an heiress with whom he had commenced a confidential intimacy—"without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which, in general, lead to coldness on one side and aversion on the other." Lord Byron had proposed for her, and been rejected.

This did not cure him of his desire for matrimony. He writes, with a singular absence of prophecy, "a wife would be my salvation." He got up one or two flirtations with other attractive young ladies; but evidently, like the Prince of Denmark, "Man contented not him, nor woman either." "The more I see of men the less I like them," he writes in February. "If I could but say so of women, too, all would be well." There are indications in his journal and letters that he had not entirely abandoned his suit to Miss Milbanke.

He returned to Newstead the same month, but it was to be off with the old love before he was on with the new, by means of selling his estate. The Fates had decreed otherwise—the purchase was not completed, and he was forced to continue her neighbour. In April, though living very fast, he was still determined "to pull up and marry," consequently another flirtation was entered upon in the following month, only to end abruptly.

It is quite clear that the old influence was strong upon him. In June he mentions his intention of visiting Newstead. "I have also heard of * * * [Mrs. Chaworth.] I should like to see her again, for I have not met her for years; and though 'the light that ne'er can shine again' is set, I do not know that 'one dear smile, like those of old,' might not make me for a moment forget the dulness of life's dream."

He was at Newstead in September; but with characteristic contradiction, instead of venturing to Annesley, he wrote a second offer of marriage to Miss Milbanke—and was accepted. He wisely kept away from Annesley during the period that elapsed before his marriage, January 2, 1815; nevertheless, that he had to undergo a powerful struggle with his long-established prepossessions no one can doubt who has read the passionate expression of his feelings, illustrating that ill-starred union, written by him only a year or two later—

"I saw him stand
Before the altar with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The starlight of his boyhood: as he stood

Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The self-same aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique oratory shook
His bosom in his solitude; and then—
As in that hour—a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced—and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been—
But the old mansion, and the accustomed hall,
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her, who was his destiny, came back,
And thrust themselves between him and the light:—
What business had they there at such a time?"

There is no record of how the source of these exquisite thoughts received the news of her lover's marriage; but Mrs. Chaworth, as far as I can ascertain, gave no sign. The poet had more than once complained of her coldness—even if this was assumed, it was her best resource, when obliged to associate, for even a brief period, with a man so impulsive and so powerfully influenced by his own feelings. She proceeded in her loyal path, to all observers, without a wish that ventured beyond her domestic circle, or a retrospection that went back before her union with Jack Musters.

Lord Byron strove to appear content with the step he had taken; but from certain excesses he fell into, there is reason to suspect that he was in this way trying to banish reflection. He got connected with Drury-lane Theatre, as a member of the Committee

of Management, and the actors and ballet dancers bothered him immensely; but his creditors bothered him more, for he had long been living far in excess of his income.

He had been scarcely a year married, during which period, as Tommy Moore, his biographer, states, he had had eight or nine executions in the house, when, in the latter end of January, Lady Byron, having arranged that they should go and stay for a time at the house of her father (now Sir Ralph Noel), parted with her husband on the most affectionate terms, and on her reaching Leicestershire, wrote him a playful and cheering letter. A few days later a communication reached him in London stating her determination never to live with him again.

There does not appear to have been any disagreement, at least that has ever come before the world; the wife had only lately become a mother, and the pecuniary difficulties of the husband could have been easily disposed of; but it was under these circumstances of increased claim on her to fulfil the obligations she had so short a time before entered into, "to love, honour, and obey" the father of her child, that she abandoned him apparently to secure to herself a life of independence from marital control, and freedom from further maternal responsibilities, or perhaps from a repetition of disagreeable things.

A great outcry was raised against Lord Byron as soon as it became known that his wife had deserted him, the public, as usual, perhaps mistakingly taking the part of "the weaker vessel." There can be, however,

but little doubt that Lady Byron, whether influenced by her mother or her maid to sever the sacred tie which had made the two of one flesh, committed a grave error of judgment or of duty.

In April, 1816, Lord Byron again went abroad; he proceeded to Switzerland, taking up his residence for a time in Geneva, where he first met his brother poet, Shelley, who was staying in the same city. They were not, however, entirely unknown to each other, for several years before, a presentation copy of "Queen Mab" had been forwarded by its young, and at that time unknown, author to the noble poet. Each may be said to have been under a cloud—each had been the object of popular prejudice—each had suffered from a great domestic sorrow, and had cherished for years an acute sense of wrong. There were, in truth, many points of sympathy between them, yet rarely have two men associated as intimates whose natures were so dissimilar.

I was not personally acquainted with Shelley, though I have long enjoyed the friendship of his son, Sir Percy Bysshe Shelley, Bart. Lady Shelley, a few years back, published a highly interesting memoir of her husband's father, the only reliable book respecting him, except his widow's, that has issued from the press. Most of my information has been derived from conversation with these, his nearest relatives.

It was natural that two young men, possessed of such highly imaginative minds, should find unusual pleasure in each other's society; and, as they were

equally fond of boating on the lake, they frequently shared that recreation, on one occasion escaping as if by a miracle from being drowned by the anticipated foundering of the vessel during a sudden squall. They shared also in animated discussion, in which the morbid melancholy of the one, and the intense mysticism of the other, were freely developed. Shelley's mind was not in any way affected by such association; but it is easy to trace his influence in after works of Lord Byron.

Byron went to Italy, and Shelley, towards the end of the year, returned to England. Before he left Switzerland, at the suggestion of Madame de Staël, Lord Byron made an attempt at reconciliation with his wife, but in vain. His heart, however, was still at Annesley, for, at this period he wrote his beautiful poem, "The Dream," as well as a fragment brooding over his separation from his lost love, in these words—

> "The absent are the dead—for they are cold,
> And ne'er can be what once we did behold;
> And they are changed and cheerless—or if yet
> The unforgotten do not all forget,
> Since thus divided—equal must it be
> If the deep barrier be of earth or sea."

Lord Byron proceeded to Venice, making some female intimacies there, which must have been entered into in attempted scorn of his first love. He then went on to Rome, but soon returned to Venice, causing every place at which he halted to be addi-

tionally celebrated as the birth-place of one of his immortal works. Here he was joined by Shelley, and the two poets became more intimate than ever, Byron being the original of Count Maddolo, in his friend's "Julio and Maddolo," which was written at this time; Julio is Shelley.

They parted again after a season of the most perfect social happiness that can be conceived. Shelly devoted himself to Naples and antiquities, and Byron to the Countess Guiccioli, the last and the least discreditable of his Venetian *liaisons*.

Byron and Shelley met once more at Ravenna, in August, 1821. According to the younger poet, his friend had much improved. But their happiness in each other's society was put an end to by an atrocious attack upon Shelley, which appears to have been published in the "Literary Gazette"—a weekly review of much influence at that time. It has been for some years extinct. Shelley went back to Pisa, where he was joined by Byron on the first of November, and here, in conjunction with Leigh Hunt, they arranged the publication of a periodical to be called "The Liberal."

Two special references during this period were made by Lord Byron to Mrs. Chaworth. The first is in a letter to his publisher, enumerating persons who possess portions of his correspondence of sufficient interest for publication. He says there are "some few to Mrs. Chaworth, but these latter are probably destroyed or inaccessible." I never heard of them.

The second is contained in the following stanzas, written on the road from Florence to Pisa—

"Oh, Fame! if e'er I took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, there only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory."

The friendship of the two poets was destined to meet with a sudden termination; for the younger, having taken a house in the Bay of Spezia, chose to resume his favourite recreation of boating, and with the companion of his voyage, Captain Williams, was drowned during a run from Leghorn to Lerice. Their bodies were washed on the shore four miles apart, and not found for a fortnight after. They were burned and then buried in the presence of Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mr. Trelawny. The ashes of the poet were subsequently transferred to the Protestant cemetery in Rome.

Thus tragically ended the career of one whose writings were prohibited during his life, and his character so vilified as to force him into expatriation. But of what avail has been the influence exercised so unscrupulously to crush his genius, and banish him from the memory of his fellow men? Every line he has written has been religiously preserved, and published again and again; and a monument only less

enduring, to commemorate his name, has been erected by his son and daughter-in-law in the church at Christchurch, Hampshire. It is in marble, and the sculptor was Henry Weekes. A full sized copy is carefully preserved in Lady Shelley's graceful boudoir, at her residence at Boscombe.

About this period Lord Byron resumed his intimacy with Lord and Lady Blessington, of which an account will be given in another chapter. Shortly afterwards he quitted the shores of Italy for his romantic expedition to assist the Greeks, then endeavouring to throw off the yoke of their Turkish masters.

The last of his poetical compositions, written on completing his thirty-sixth year, is true to the great passion that had so powerfully affected his imagination. He asks in the first stanza—

> "Yet though I cannot be beloved,
> Still let me love."

And in the fourth confesses that—

> "The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
> The exalted portion of the pain,
> And power of love, I cannot share,
> But wear the chain."

Subsequently the desire is prophetically expressed to end the long disappointment in a hero's grave. The grave came, but not such as would have satisfied a hero. He was seized with fever, and expired after a short illness. His last words referred to his wife,

his child, and his sister. The great passion of his life had vanished at the approach of the destroyer of all illusions.

Lord Byron's corpse was conveyed to England and buried in the parish church of Hucknell, near Newstead, and therefore not far from Annesley. It is probable that Mrs. Chaworth sorrowed with womanly tenderness for the early dissolution of her youthful suitor; but at this time, June 1824, the cares and responsibilities of a family had, some people imagined, driven from her heart all sentimental romance in which he had the least concern. She lived thenceforth apparently devoted to her husband and children, and caring for nothing beyond her circle at home; nevertheless, as long as time shall endure, her name will be perpetuated as the first love of the greatest poet of his age and country.

To those who would venture thoughtlessly to criticise the feeling to which Byron surrendered himself—literally heart and soul—I address the admonition of another poet—

"—— curious fool, be still,
Is human love the growth of human will?"

It was pre-ordained, doubtless, that the heiress of Annesley should be the source of such intense disappointment to one, that she might become a source of the most exquisite gratification to millions.

In the unpretending little church of Colwick, two miles from Nottingham, there is a monumental figure

representing Mary Chaworth. At its base is the following inscription:—

To the Memory of
MARY ANN MUSTERS,
Died 6th February, 1832,
AGED 47.

For her who sleeps beneath this holy place,
This marble speaks our grief, but points to this—
Faith in God's mercies, through a Saviour's grace,
To wake in regions of eternal bliss.

T. W. V.*

Mary Ann Musters was only daughter and heiress of George Chaworth, Esq., of Annesley, in the county of Nottingham, and wife of John Musters, Esq., of Colwick, in the said county, by whom this monument was erected.

The manor of Colwick belonged formerly to the Byron family, coming into their possession probably in the fourteenth century. Collins, in his valuable Peerage, says:—"Sir Richard Byron married Joan, second daughter of William de Colwick, of Colwick, in the county of Nottingham, and sister and heir of Thomas de Colwick, who was two years old at the death of his father, in the 35th of Edward III. By this match a considerable estate came into the family." There are several monuments of the Byron family in the chancel of the church. One to Sir John Byron, who fought with the Earl of Richmond at Bosworth, against King Richard, has the following inscription:—"Here lyes Sir John Byron, Knight, late Constable of Nottingham Castle, Master of Sherwood

* Written by Thomas Wrightson Vaughan, who married one of Mr. Musters' sisters.

Forest, Castrum, or Lieutenant of the Isle of Man, Steward of Manchester College, which John died the 3rd of May, in the year of our Lord 1488. On whose soul God have mercy. Amen." Collins mentions an inscription on a memorial window to Sir Nicholas Byron, whose widow married Sir Gervoise Clifton:—"Pray for the soul of the worthy man Nicholas Byron, Esq., and of Joan, his consort, who made this window in the year 1496, and 12th of Henry VII." From the inscription it would seem that the memorial was placed in the church before the gallant Nicholas was knighted. Henry VIII. gave the son of this Sir Nicholas the priory of Newstead.

A friend who lived long in the immediate neighbourhood of Jack Musters sent me this startling account of his wife; but for the truth of the assertion contained in it, of course I do not vouch:—"Bowed down by care and neglect, I have often seen Mary Chaworth—'the scion of a time-honoured race'—kneeling in the ancestral pew in the old village church, casting her sorrows and her burdens on her Saviour. And who can venture to say that there were not times in that holy place, wherein were the marble effigies of the bold ancestors of him whose first and only love she had ever been—when her fancy wandered to the old hearth and antique rectory at Annesley—well nigh as desolate now as her own heart; and thought that had her lot been linked with his, their destiny might not, as now, have ended—'the one in madness—both in misery?'"

About this time, Moore, the poet, visited Colwick,

for the purpose of seeing Mrs. Musters. He was collecting materials for a memoir of Byron. In his "Diary," he says that Musters was fortunately from home, that he sung (probably one of his own tender lyrics), and that "Mrs. Musters cried." So that the apparently insensible heart *did* cherish feelings of regard for her distinguished lover. The neglect, no doubt, refers to certain notorious irregularities of her husband. His tenants invariably spoke of Jack Musters as a capital landlord, but acknowledged that they would have liked him better had he been less fond of falling in love with their wives and daughters. Her health declined visibly after the death of Lord Byron, and her own was accelerated by a riotous attack upon her house during the Reform mania of 1831. It is reported that she lived by herself at Annesley during her last painful years; but it was Colwick Hall that was sacked by the Nottingham weavers, in October of that year, and she died at Wiverton Hall in the following February.

With regard to Lady Byron's vindication of herself and her parents (in reply to certain statements in Moore's life of her husband, published by him), it is scarcely possible to read it carefully without coming to the conclusion that—"the lady doth protest too much."

It seems from this that Lord Byron's nearest relatives and personal attendant had represented to his wife that he was not only insane, but in danger of self-destruction, and that Dr. Baillie, who had never seen him, from such representations by Lady Byron,

recommended her temporary absence "as an experiment." In pursuance of this advice, Lady Byron parted from her husband with the greatest apparent kindness, and returned to her father's house. On making her case known here, Sir Ralph and Lady Noel, she says, professed the utmost sympathy and affection for their son-in-law, and invited him to Kirkby Mallory. Nevertheless, on certain reports reaching her, Lady Byron suddenly changed her opinion, and deemed it right to communicate to her parents "that if I were to consider Lord Byron's past conduct as that of a person of sound mind, nothing could induce me to return to him."

The absent wife's first step at this crisis was not to ascertain precisely her husband's state of mind, but to send her mother with a written statement (in which there was a reservation) to obtain legal opinions as to her right to enforce a separation. She adds that now being satisfied that the notion of Lord Byron's insanity was an illusion, "I no longer hesitated to authorize such measures as were necessary in order to secure me from being ever again placed in his power."

Then follows a letter from Dr. Lushington with the astounding intelligence that the statement brought by Lady Noel did not justify a separation, but that a fortnight later Lady Byron called at his chambers, and communicated something to him (a stranger) which she had withheld even from her mother—of course, the reservation just alluded to—and that *then* the learned civilian "considered a reconciliation impossible."

The mystification here, the contradiction, the avoidance of any specified charge, give to this document the character of legal supervision; and it is scarcely possible to entertain a doubt that the writer had left her husband with the determination never to return to him. His authority had become irksome, nor less so the annoyances arising from his pecuniary embarrassments.

It was in vain, therefore, that he made appeal after appeal to her, in the most moving language, and with the most powerful arguments. She proved implacable; not only till the tomb had closed over his errors, but, alas! betrayed a vindictiveness of spirit that respected neither the grave nor its illustrious tenant—for the nameless accusation she published in 1830 could have no other effect than to cast a deeper shadow upon his fame than any of his assailants had left there.

Lord Byron's intimacy with the beautiful actress, Mrs. Mardyn, the alleged cause of quarrel, is a fiction. The estrangement, in my opinion, originated in his devotion to Mary Ann Chaworth, or in circumstances connected with it. Each impressive evidence of it that he gave to the world from time to time was regarded as high treason to "his lawful wife." But, besides this jealousy, there were other influences, as I have already intimated, in which pride and vanity had full sway.

The noble poet's position suggests that of a still more unfortunate gentleman, though there are striking differences in the course of their true loves. He was

assassinated by a rival, to prevent the consummation of his marriage with an heiress, having previously either forgotten or avoided the nuptial ceremony with another lady. His fate is recorded in the well-known epitaph.

"Here lies Tom Thynne, of Longleat Hall,
Who never would have miscarried,
Had he wedded the woman he bedded withal,
Or lay with the woman he married."

The only child of Lord and Lady Byron,

"Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart,"

was brought up apparently with the most rigid exclusion from the influence of her father's name and fame. There is little to be recorded of her, there being nothing romantic in her nature nor in her destiny. In due time she married—a very satisfactory alliance, for it made her Lady King, and subsequently Countess of Lovelace—and as appropriately became a mother. Having fulfilled these ordinary requirements, she passed away. Her death from cancer took place in 1852; that of Lady Byron in 1860.

As in the case of his friend Shelley, there cannot be a greater contrast than there is between the outcry raised against some of Byron's works when they first appeared, and the demand for them since his death. Those that once were held the most objectionable compositions, have become the most popular; but those that have the deepest interest for all classes

of his innumerable readers, are the result of his Mary's inspiration.

I must here be permitted to add a short account of another of the Byron group, as a striking contrast to the last. Mrs. Chaworth sacrificed her feelings to propriety—the Countess Guiccioli sacrificed propriety to her feelings; the first as a reward had to endure the constant infidelities of the husband to whom she had been so steadfastly loyal, and the other for her conjugal shortcomings was rewarded by being caressed and honoured wherever she appeared.

When this lady was in England, I had, to me, the then delight of making her acquaintance, through the medium of Lady Blessington, and found her very agreeable and accomplished, though in figure not exactly what I expected in a Byron beauty. She used very kindly to sing to me; and, young as I was, of course, I fell, or at least thought that I fell, in love with her, probably more from reading than seeing.

My friend at Gore House patronized her immensely, showed her all attentions, and in her communications it is impossible to exaggerate the sweetness of her compliments. La Guiccioli did not cry out like Lady Holland on a similar provocation; but she possessed a good deal of shrewd sense, and penetrated the motive of her vivacious friend. A request came to her, first, for "a little Italian tale, prose or verse;" next, absolutely, for *Lord Byron's letters to her!* The Italian Lady excused herself with as much tact as taste.

An excuse for her love for Lord Byron may be

found in the fact that she was then only seventeen, and had been forced into a marriage with a man older than her father. Her disinterestedness to Byron was proved by her refusing the liberal settlements he offered to make in her favour before his departure from Italy. After his death she displayed the most earnest devotion to his memory, and, though she subsequently married an elderly French nobleman, the Marquis de Boissy, the love that had filled her heart in her youth, glowed with a warmth that death alone can extinguish.

CHAPTER V.

VIRGINIA WATER AND WINDSOR CASTLE.

Life of a courtier—Drawing-rooms and State Balls—The royal household—Penny-wise principles—George IV.'s distaste for Radicalism—Confidential revelations—The Privy Purse (Sir William Knighton, Bart.)—The lady—Caricatures—The cottage and its private grounds—A happy pair—The sofa portrait—Death of Sir Thomas Lawrence—The sick chamber and the Book of Books—Visit of the Bishop—Grand funeral pageant.

I DO not think that the life of a courtier is to be envied. For of what does it consist? In assisting to make a series of grand pageants of a very composite character, the chief elements being gold lace, ostrich feathers, rich satin and fine cloth, delicate cambric and flashing diamonds; the principal colours scarlet and purple, violet and white; and in breathing an atmosphere redolent of fashionable perfumery, yet not sweet, and the reverse of wholesome.

And such delights can now only be indulged in at the expense of much personal inconvenience, for everybody, at any rate, everybody's wife and daughters insist on going to Court; the consequent crowding, stifling, and too frequently scuffling, in the royal apartments, which exist now, were quite unknown in the less ambitious and more exclusive times of George III. and Queen Charlotte, when presentations were limited.

No doubt, however, the Court has its attractions, even under these unpromising circumstances. A drawing-room must be a beautiful spectacle, as female loveliness is its alpha and omega—a levée must be grand, as all that is great and noble in the country combine to produce it—and a State Ball cannot help being magnificent, for it is composed of the most admirable characteristics of both, rendered more delightful to the senses by a graceful entertainment, assisted by the exquisite music and the brilliant light.

A State Ball, however, is not what it used to be, when only the *élite* of society were admitted; the Whigs now have made it a miscellaneous assemblage, composed of elements whose sole recommendation is the possession of political influence.

To be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, are enjoyments to which few mortals are indifferent, consequently the candidates for employment about the Court are always a great deal more numerous than the offices in the different palaces require. The Court mice do not appear to entertain any idea of coveting "the crust of bread and liberty" of the outsiders. In vain, even for the humblest officials, was written honest Andrew Marvel's self-denying declaration, beginning—

"Climb at Court for me who will."

At this particular period of my history, the reigns of George III. and George IV., the chief officers of the Household were quite satisfied that their lines had been set in pleasant places, and generally,

made the most of the advantage. Every member of the royal establishment seemed to appreciate the command, as well as the truth, published by the Eastern despot—"Eat, drink, and be merry; all the rest's not worth a fillip."

The Beef-eaters flourished luxuriantly, each Exon seemed exonerated from the least responsibility, every page looked as if growing into a Lord Chamberlain, daily and quarterly waiters appeared as though only waiting for quarter-day, Lords of the Bedchamber and Grooms of the Stole rivalled each other in their perfect state of physical enjoyment, and the Clerks of the Green Cloth, of the Kitchen, and of all the other offices that were paid for a little penmanship with capital wages, thanked their stars for having been stationary, and made them and their materials of a like character. As for the royal tradesmen, they literally lived in clover—there was the best understanding between them and the purveyors. In short, St. James's was the Happy Valley in which there was no Rasselas.

From this dream of courtly bliss they were rudely awakened by a retired Scotch surgeon of anything rather than retiring habits, who, having got into Parliament on penny-wise principles, forced them upon the nation in all matters in which he considered pound-foolish opinions prevailed. If extravagance had established itself anywhere it was in the royal household, and from the throne to the scullery the crusade then being preached by this economic Peter the Hermit caused an agitation that was extremely

uncomfortable, for it affected both their tempers and their salaries.

The Cabinet were obliged at last to take the subject into consideration, and having, with much trouble, obtained reliable information from some of the officials, were, after a long delay in reporting the case, officially constrained to recommend a closer scrutiny of the royal expenditure.

It so happened that his Majesty George IV. was not always, as he was styled, gracious—sometimes he was a little the reverse—sometimes a good deal. He did not at all approve, in the first place, of penny-wise principles, and was extremely discomposed by the countenance his ministers had given to them; he had a strong distaste for Radicalism in any shape; and such sentiments every day getting more and more prominently brought under his observation, he grew more and more irritable when obliged to give his attention to politics.

In this state of mind his Majesty found sensible relief in abusing his ministers. Nothing gratified him more than to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by an opposition peer seeking an audience to declaim against them individually and collectively in a style that would have made them shake in their shoes had they heard a tithe of it. This misfortune, however, did not happen, for that considerate sovereign may have had a visit from one or more of his well-abused servants within half-an-hour of the dismissal of his Whig visitor, and been more cordial to them than

ever he had been—when he invariably satisfied his displeasure, if he felt any, by abusing their tailors.

It is on record that the representative of one of the great families who used to share political patronage between them, obtained an audience on the plea of being about to travel for some considerable time. The ostensible cause for leaving England was probably the state of the Duke's health; but it has been supposed that the unhealthy state of his Grace's income had something to do with it. Independently of being an eager politician, with scores of dependents who furnished him with information, for which he had to pay largely, he was a man of taste—a *virtuoso*, a *connoisseur*—a person, in short, over whom the pound-foolish principle had had an extraordinary influence, and he had displayed it without let or hindrance till his library was filled with the rarest books, his walls hung with the choicest pictures, and he could boast of having one of the finest collections of scarce prints in England.

These were only a few of the channels through which his resources had been running away from him, and now the beginning of the end had come—the auctioneer had been many days selling nothing but his engravings, and it was expected that his MSS., his coins, his gems, his books, his marbles, and his pictures, would follow. The evil day, however, was staved off, and the Duke had determined to solace himself with a pleasant yacht voyage along the shores of the Mediterranean.

The King honoured him with the very friendly re-

ception he was in the habit of giving to persons of political influence whom he desired to propitiate, and indulged in a most confidential conversation, delivered with his usual volubility, on everything in general and nothing in particular, till he happened to think of his ministers, when out burst a torrent of indignation that convinced his Grace that their days of office were numbered.

This impression was carefully maintained throughout the interview, and another grafted upon it, which was, that he, the Duke, who had long been ambitious of holding the first post in his Majesty's councils, would shortly be called upon to form a new administration.

His Grace went home, put off the yacht voyage *sine die*, as he now felt satisfied that his health was equal to any emergency; but after waiting several days, and finding not the slightest step had been taken in the desired direction, he sent his stores on board, and having assembled his small crew and a few select associates, stepped on the deck of his vessel, and bade his "native land good-night!" in a state of the highest political indignation.

One of the most influential persons at Court at this time was a gentleman who had entered the palace in the capacity of physician, and had felt the pulse of the heir-apparent with such marked success that he acquired a large share of his patient's confidence—this he entirely secured by placing in his hands some papers of importance that came into his possession through having been appointed executor to a gentleman who had been his Royal Highness's private secretary.

On the Prince becoming King, instead of having to write occasional prescriptions, the doctor found himself entrusted with his Majesty's private correspondence, and in place of superintending the administrations of draughts and mixtures, was employed in the supervision of the Privy Purse expenses, and in administering to its pains.

He did not, like Struenzee at the Court of Denmark, make his medical knowledge assist him in political intrigue; there was no occasion to say, "Physician, heal thyself!"

He knew better than to interfere in the slightest degree with the duties of any of his Majesty's Ministers. He allowed it to be clearly understood that he was a courtier—not a politician—and, with infinite skill and tact, he played out his part. No one knew better his royal master's temperament or his constitution, and acting on his knowledge, he kept himself free from embarrassing connexions, and still more embarrassing rivalries, and over a most uncertain disposition, and amid all sorts of conflicting interests, maintained his influence to the last. He, of course, dropped the Physician, and "threw physic to the dogs!" or to bipeds, who might require it more; he was early honoured with the title of Baronet, received a Grand Cross in the later years of the King's reign, was entrusted with foreign missions of peculiar delicacy, and became the confidential correspondent of Princesses, of Cabinet Ministers, and of great people of all kinds.

The Baronet was especially formed for his new voca-

tion—handsome in face, graceful in figure, well bred and well principled, with unfailing good temper, and agreeable manners; he was evidently born a courtier.

It is well understood that—

> "When a lady's in the case,
> Of course all other things give place."

I ascertained this to be a mistake. The "things" did not give place, but the lady did. In truth, she gave place, pay, and power, as her nearest relatives and connexions speedily discovered. The donor of such good things differed in many essentials from the Cynthias of the minute who had hitherto attracted the royal attention. Every kind of female merit had been tried, from "miss in her teens" to "fat, fair, and forty." But the lady to whom I am now referring was fatter, fairer, and, perhaps I may say, fortier, than any of her female contemporaries.

I am not going to insinuate or express any scandal on such matters. On such topics my lips, or rather my inkstand, is hermetically sealed. The simple fact was that his Majesty, having grown incapable of going much into society, required to be amused, and, like Louis le Grand in one respect, though not in being unamusable, preferred that amusement should come from a particular source.

The "Lady," for so she was usually styled in the Court correspondence, had a daughter grown up—a beautiful creature like her mother, but, of course, not quite so full blown a flower. She had also a son—a handsome young man of fashion, and of course

much looked up to in the Palace as well as elsewhere. Lastly, but most important of all, she had a husband who possessed high rank and great wealth; therefore was not likely to be influenced by ordinary temptations to allow his wife to fill the invidious position of a royal favourite. He did not want sense, much less honour, and must have been perfectly satisfied of the harmlessness of the intimacy.

A series of coloured prints were published about this period, the caricaturists being then in great force, no "Punch" looming in the distance. They were full-length portraits of the individuals employed in looking after "the Sovereign" Coach; these being still coaching days, railways not being yet laid down. There was "the Duke," in a mighty top-coat of many capes and a long whip, as "the man what drives the Sovereign;" and Sir Robert, with a stable costume if not a stable mind, as "the cad to the man what drives the Sovereign." There was "the Lady," with her full white throat enveloped in a Belcher handkerchief; a tight-buttoned coat over her ample vest, and a hat that partly concealed her fair brow, trying to look a model of stage integrity, as "the guard to the Sovereign." Lastly, there was a swell dragsman of awful proportions, bearing the royal features, who was "the man what drives whenever he likes."

The King found himself less and less able to undergo the fatigues arising from levées, drawing-rooms, audiences, and the thousand and one daily inconveniences of regal life in England; and as often

as he could, for as long as he could, he escaped from the wearying routine of Carlton House and St. James's to a strictly maintained privacy at a small but luxuriantly furnished residence known as "The Cottage," near Windsor; his principal companion, though not always his only one, being "the Lady."

The utmost care was taken to prevent intrusion and avoid attention of any kind; and here his Majesty loved to drive in a low pony phæton in the secluded and beautiful grounds attached to the residence, charmed by the lively conversation of his amiable and attentive associate. She made herself very agreeable. Her eyes, of the favourite colour, were extremely animated in their expression; her transparent complexion, of the favourite roses and lilies, was always bright with the most winning smiles; and a sweetly-musical voice, low and tender, as her august friend liked the feminine tones to be, invariably repeated words that were pleasant to hear.

In short, the lady kept him in good humour with the world; and as she made it pretty clear that, in her conviction, he was a compound of Sardanapalus and Louis XIV., Alexander the Great and Augustus Cæsar, Alcibiades and the Admirable Crichton, he was on equally good terms with himself.

His Majesty was quite able to take his share in the conversation, and support it with spirit out of his own resources; but it greatly assisted in passing away the time, without suggesting a consciousness that it was passing, to have some one at hand to

judiciously start topics, and judiciously maintain their interest when it was flagging; or start new subjects as each was talked out. In this way came stratum upon stratum of gossip of well known, and scandal of ill-known characters; jests at the expense of the Ministers ; satire aimed at the leaders of the Opposition; a little highly-seasoned gallantry, much playful banter, an occasional quotation from Shakspeare and the classical authors—an amusing anecdote, a pleasant recollection, and all was told.

They varied their drives with an amusement, which, for one at least of the pair, it was rather late in the day to adopt. This was that species of sport which Dr. Johnson has defined as having a fool at one end and a worm at the other. The pair occasionally spent an hour or so on a very fine day angling from the picturesque banks, and in a boat, on the Virginia Water,—enthusiastic disciples of Izaak Walton,—equally interested in each other's bites, and feeling similar excitement in landing their finny prey. Nothing could be more contented than the satisfaction of the King when he had secured his perch; nothing more joyous than the gratification of the lady in knowing that she had hooked her gudgeon.

This intimacy was regarded with the most solemn official reserve by the officers of the Household in their relations with the public. Nevertheless, to them it was an inexhaustible source of secret amusement. Now the happy pair were talked of as Romeo and Juliet, then as Oberon and Titania; sometimes they were Hamlet and Ophelia, at others

Ferdinand and Miranda; and—alas! for the devotion of courtiers!—not unfrequently they were referred to as Falstaff and Dame Quickly.

There were no lovers in the whole range either of history or fiction they did not call into requisition to indicate that tender union. Lovers, however, they knew very well they were not; the idea was ludicrous, and it was made the most of. The sly reflections on the subject that were interchanged by Fremantle and Herbert Taylor would have created more broad grins than George Coleman ever provoked in his happiest mood.

The King might have been in worse hands. In truth, "the Lady" did not make the capital out of her favouritism she could have done. Among the jewels presented to her were a few articles belonging to the Crown she was called upon afterwards to return. The donor, though thus imprudently liberal, did not imitate the reckless prodigality of James the First, who literally cast the royal pearls before the greediest of swine. All the gifts this lady ever received from her distinguished friend could have been held by her in little estimation for their money value, as she possessed ample means of her own for filling her jewel-case worthily. The influence her position at Court gave her may have been more esteemed, but I do not think it was abused in any marked degree.

It was with difficulty the King could be got to go through the now wearying ceremonies of State that were considered essential to the support of his royal

dignity—to stand for hours smiling and bowing, and repeating agreeable nothings to people he was wishing at the bottom of the Red Sea, with the most amiable condescension possible. The first gentleman in Europe could not forget the least important of the laws of politeness; but the first gentleman in Europe, persecuted by a crowd of loyal subjects in court suits and regimentals, and professional or official costumes of various kinds, was undergoing a martyrdom that made him glad to hurry back to the *dolce far niente* and the *otium cum dignitate* of the cottage and "the Lady," with the deepest sense of relief that his sufferings were over for that day.

Our royal master grew more infirm, and his enjoyments were getting more and more of an indoor kind. He had a little music, occasionally a little reading, much card-playing, and more scandal. His pleasures being thus circumscribed, there is no doubt that he would have offered as liberally as the monarch in the classic story for a new one. "The Lady" had no novelties, and could not procure them for him for love or money. She did her best to keep him amused with the resources at her command, and was not altogether unsuccessful. The courtiers did their best to assist in the good work, and were not altogether unappreciated. Illness, however, often marred their best efforts, and age was making as great alterations in the disposition as in the form of their beloved master.

The well-known sofa portrait was the most successful piece of pictorial flattery ever produced by

the most accomplished Court painter who has transferred royal likenesses to canvas. The padded coat might be made to fit as exactly, the perfect wig be worn as naturally, but no such portrait could be painted again. Very much to his patron's regret—a loss equally severe to the entire Court—the painter had just died.

The loss of his favourite artist affected the King almost as deeply as that of his favourite brother, which had occurred a short time before. The latter, full of years and kindness, if not of glory, had ceased to fill his great command. We can only now realize that loss when observing the statue on a certain pillar, where, like an amount in one of the numerous ledgers in which the illustrious hero figured to an astonishing extent, he is carried up to the top of the column, to be brought down only when the coming New Zealander discovers the unliquidated balance which Time will then have struck at its base.

At last the King was obliged to take to his bed. A royal bed-chamber is by no means an unpleasant place to take to. The magnificence of the furniture, the beauty of the pictures, and the air of luxury impressed upon everything in the apartment, were extremely agreeable to the eye. Indeed, there was but one object that did not harmonize with the beauty and splendour to be found in every other direction. This was the occupant of the state couch.

That majesty, deprived of its externals, is a jest, is known to every student of small riddles; but in this instance it was a sorry jest indeed. On the

pillow lay a head enveloped in a cambric night-cap, having a deep border of rich lace. Similar expensive frilling was on the bosom and at the wristbands of the exquisitely-worked night-gown, as described by that Court gossip, Fremantle, to his patron at Stowe. The effect was unquestionably feminine, though far from agreeable.

The recumbent figure was restless and uneasy, turning to stare unmeaningly at the Titian Venus on one wall, presently turning on the other side to stare as unintelligently at the Giulio Romano Graces on the opposite wall.

Possibly "the old familiar faces" may have brought to his recollection others still more familiar, which must have come "not in single spies, but in battalions," with an unprofitable, an almost disagreeable force of camp-followers, in vain regrets and bitter self-reproaches. All I venture to state is that the sick man stared vacantly on one picture, whatever it was, and, having turned himself round, stared as vacantly on the other.

Presently his wandering, listless eye fell upon a large book, which lay on a small table conveniently close to his bed-side. He had not seen such a book in the room before, and he knew it must have been placed where it was by an affectionate hand. He stretched out his arm for the volume, and ascertained that it was the inestimable consolation of the Christian in his last extremity, printed in large type, so that its blessings, its warnings, its hopes, and its denunciations, might be the more readily appreciated

when the volume was appealed to in the infirmities of age. As he was looking into its inspired pages, he heard some one approaching; he immediately replaced the book, and fell back on the pillow.

A very quiet footstep approached the bed-side. The august patient languidly looked out of his spiritless eyes, and recognised the Bishop of Chichester. He closed them, and gave no sign. Perhaps the visit of the Prelate may have suggested some uncomfortable reflections, may have brought to his mind the conviction that he had been sent for a profoundly important purpose—the same for which the Book printed in large type had been placed so conveniently within his reach.

Involuntarily the monarch divested himself of his state, and realized his human helplessness. Under these good influences, the Bishop found no difficulty in performing his solemn duty with the most satisfactory result, particularly to those among the royal household who had exhibited such tender consideration in their master's great extremity.

A few days later, the last act of the drama was played out in a magnificent pageant. Windsor became an imposing background to one of the most effective solemnities its quaint streets and regal castle had ever looked upon; and in the royal vault of its truly royal chapel was consigned all that was mortal of one who, as Prince of Wales, Regent, and King, had enjoyed the privileges of greatness to the full.

It has been much the fashion to abuse him, but the faults he possessed were human and almost unavoid-

able under the circumstances by which he had been surrounded. It is easy for those who live far from temptations to condemn such as inevitably find them in every path they are obliged to take; presented to them, too, as a necessary part of the performance for which they have been cast by destiny. There is no absolute necessity for my coming forward as his apologist; but I cannot forget that he was my godfather, and, whether as Prince or Sovereign, invariably treated me with kindness.

CHAPTER VI.

INCIDENTS OF SPORT.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and Mr. Sturges Bourne—Old fox-hounds—A summer day at Lyndhurst—Harrogate at his work—Exciting chase of an otter—Lord Albemarle—Smike, my terrier—His fight with three otters—The bitch otter with young—Buck stalking—Bucks wounded by rifle bullets—Lulworth Castle—Extraordinary friendship for me in an old retriever of Mr. Weld's—Sea-fowl—Real winter—Negro mendicant—Lord Malmsbury at Achnacarry—Story of the Gusa stag—Lochiel's mountains—Heron Court—Game bagged there—Lord Wemyss and the sporting blacksmith—Goose shooting—Seeking a venison deer.

My first act after receiving the forest licence to kill game, was to ask the several rangers—Mr. Sturges Bourne and the late Duke of Cambridge—if I might hunt the otter and course hares in the forest. Having received permission from each in succession, I resolved to have a touch at the otters, and therefore wrote to my old servant, George Carter, then with the Duke of Grafton, for any old worn-out and steady hounds that might suit my purpose. He sent me some, and wrote to say that my old favourite fox-hound, Harrogate, if I liked, should accompany them, as he had no longer any use to put him to. Harrogate and I had not met for years, but the meeting at Beacon was just as joyful as if we had been severed but for a day. His joy affected the other hounds who came with him, who

seeing him so delighted, at once adopted me as their friend. Just the same was Harrogate's remembrance of Mrs. Berkeley, though it was some years longer since he had seen her; he even knew the sight of the basin in which, in former days, she used to sop his bread when he came round to the drawing-room window at Harrold from the field, where the rest of the pack were at exercise.

The first day I went out with three couples of old fox-hounds and three or four of my white terriers, it was to hunt a live otter just caught, and fresh from the river. This otter was put into a little stream in Holmesley Walk, by which there is a considerable pond, and then I drew for him. The hounds, on finding, entered at once, and soon killed, for of all "bag" animals an otter in that way affords less sport than any other. The next day that I went out saw me on the stream near Lyndhurst, that runs not far from Dinney Ridge. It was a beautiful summer's day, and, supposing no otter to have been on the water, the scene was worth walking through, were it but for its wildness and beauty. Deep beds of the golden-blossomed bog myrtle, in places flanked the stream, tangled with the peculiar grasses of the swamps, and occasionally, in the drier places, matted with brambles and the shoots of the alder.

We were near what was once a decoy for fowl, but it was now grown up into cover, and giving the hounds the wind, I was stepping from hag to hag in a myrtle-bog, curiously examining the banks of the stream for either "seal" or "spoil," and coaxing the old fox-hounds to forsake a wider draw in

drier places for a fox, and to hang on the river with me. They had begun to do this, and were evidently thinking that I was in search of some drain where a fox had gone to ground, for they leant over the sides of the stream, and tried the hollow roots, as they saw me do; all at once old Harrogate fixed my attention. He was about ten yards in front of me, and rather more than that space from the river, when he suddenly winded high up in the air, raising himself on his hinder legs, amid the tangled cover, sprung a yard or two nearer to the stream, over all impediments, and again did the same. His countenance wore a doubtful but an excited expression, and I knew at once he had found some vermin. Calling softly to those near me, "Make in on a shallow, above and below, for we are about to find," in an undertone to Harrogate, I cheerfully cried, "You do't, old boy!"

Each jump, with a flourishing stern, brought him nearer to the spot, till at last he paused on the river's brink, directing his glance and his nose to an old root under the dark alders on the opposite side. He stood a moment, and then sprung in and swam across to the holt, his bristles up, his stern waving from side to side, and with a peculiar fling of his head, giving promise of his well-remembered tongue. It needed but the cheer from me and the old hound spoke, seizing and tearing the root above him with his teeth; in an instant hounds and terriers were "together," and all raging in full cry, rending the root and earth around the holt, as if they were mad.

The moment Harrogate touched the root, I cried, "An otter down!" and then the fun began. The shallow above first resounded with the "Tallyho! look back!"—the hounds and terriers ranged on either side the river, and the former made short casts, to assure themselves he had not gone away. Pick-axe and spade now thundered over the holts, and men were manning the alder and willow boughs, where one would bear them, that hung upon the stream, while others got into the water and struck with their spears at every wave or bubble that came by them.

One of them, and one of the most excited, as well as the first in the water, was my cousin, the present Lord Albemarle. He struck at the passing otter, and broke his spear on the gravelly bed of the stream.

Now the lower shallow re-echoed with similar cries to the one above, and then some tenant of a slippery bough would see the otter beneath his foot, and, forgetting that there would not be much resistance from below to recover his balance if he overshot himself, striking impetuously, and hitting nothing, down headlong he went, as if he meant to catch the otter in his mouth, followed by a cheer from me, of "Well done, old boy! but try again, and catch him next time."

After this had continued some time, the hounds and terriers putting the otter down whenever it rose to vent, a terrible row was heard on the lower shallow, for some countryman with a stick had hit the otter in view of one of the hounds, and together

they killed him. Having harangued the country people, and told them if anyone ever struck an otter again that I was hunting I should undoubtedly strike the offender, we called a council as to which way we should continue to draw. Among those around me was the old keeper, Primmer, in care of that walk, who had been a keeper at Berkeley Castle under my father; Mr. George St. Barbe, of Lymington, Colonel Keppel, Mr. Stone, and many more; the late Colonel Thornhill, who was also there, came up and said he wished I would return to the spot where we had killed the otter, for that "Smike," my terrier, afterwards so famous in otter-hunting, would not leave a holt that had not been dug.

I took the hounds to the place; they backed the terrier with their tongues—"An otter down!" once more, and the fun began again. It was a beautiful place to hunt an otter in, and to enter a pack new to the game they were hunting; and the shallows being again stopped to prevent access to more difficult water, and sticks forbidden, the cry kept up for an hour. Every holt was dug down to the water's edge, so that the prey must swim or dive, till at last, on finding a portion of the bank unoccupied by a foe, the second otter fairly broke water and set his head over the heather, I suppose, for some old drain or earth that he knew of. I heard the halloo of "Gone away!" and made to the spot, with a touch of my horn; and it was good to see how the old hounds became young again, with such a scent to serve them! They put their sterns down and their heads up, and

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"I heard you call out that 'we were about to find,' and at the same moment Smike, followed at some distance by a single hound, came running down the side of the stream, evidently on a drag directly towards me."

About fifty yards from where he stood, and about four or five paces from the edge of the water, in a swampy spot in the meadow, was a small mass of tangled reeds, briers, and bushes, perhaps twenty yards in circumference, or not so much. Right into this little thicket Smike's drag took him, and, to my groom's amazement, out on the grass rolled three otters and Smike all fighting, the latter yelling with fury and pain at the treatment he met with, and the young or three parts grown otter, whom he had fixed on, screaming in concert, to all of which Newman added his view halloo and whowoop. The row had not lasted a second when hand over hand raced up the old hound, and with a rush knocked Smike and the three otters into the water, but seizing and assisting to kill the one upon which Smike maintained his hold. Having worried this one, I took up the chase of the other two, finding them both, and changing from one to the other occasionally, but at last settling to the old bitch otter.

Than the work she cut out for us, I never saw anything more beautiful. About the water meadows there are several streams, or rather one stream divided into several; one of these, a very swift but shallow one, ran by the side of a bank, on which was a "plashed" and double-laid blackthorn hedge, and up

this stream the otter, when beaten, took her course, with scarce water enough at times to hide her. When the water shoaled too much she crept into the hedge, in which alone the terriers could follow her, and then it was perfect to see the hounds splashing up the water, as gazing into the hedge they endeavoured to head and nick in upon their prey. When the hounds dashed on to the tops of the laid blackthorns, down the otter went again into the stream, and so on till other streams and deeper water were for a time regained. The chase with this old otter, hard at it, lasted an hour and three-quarters, in as hot and sunny a day in summer as needs be; and when the pack fairly hunted her down, forced her out of the water, and caught and killed her in a thick hedge, I was nearly run to a stand-still.

Stretched on my back, the hounds having worried the otter, I was longing for something to drink, when my host of the night uncorked a bottle of porter, "up" to the fullest extent, and fired a stream of hot froth into my parched throat. I thought I never should have recovered the use of my throat more; however, by a liberal donation from a cool trout stream, matters were set all right, and a warm bath, on my return to the house, enabled me to do ample justice to my friend's most hospitable fare. I viewed the second young otter just before killing the old one; but as we, the hounds and myself, were tired, I left him for a future day.

I once found a bitch otter on the Efford Stream, in the act of making a couch for her young. Old

Palestine, from the Grafton Kennel, found and disturbed her in the midst of it. At her we went for seven hours and a quarter, with constant views; and during that time, on a stump overhanging the river, *she miscarried*, and gave birth to two cubs, born a few days only before their time. A hound found them, and when I took one in my hand it was scarcely cold. She beat us from want of light, and well she deserved to escape. The work that myself and my keeper, James Dewy, did on that day, in tearing up holts, at times up to the waist in water, and then having to go in our wet things a distance of six miles at dark, with tired hounds, was severer than I should like to undergo now, though there is no saying what the view of an otter will produce, if I find another. The only ill effect it had was, to give us each a toothache on the following day.

The buck-stalking in the New Forest was very perfect; nothing could be wilder than the ground, or, latterly, than the deer, and I was obliged to adopt every kind of *ruse* to get a shot, particularly when the keepers and their assistants were killing every buck they could get at. At times I used to ride carelessly towards the deer, and openly, caring nothing for the wind, whistling and singing like forest "marksmen" after ponies and cattle; and now and then the deer would be deceived by it, and let me come within rifle distance, then, having watched my opportunity when they nodded at a fly, or fed, I dropped from my horse into the heather. They would frequently keep looking at the horse, and a few

minutes would often elapse before the thought struck them that the rider was no longer in sight; and while they were making up their minds on the state of affairs, the bullet reached them. I saw one of these scenes very well told in the "Gloucester Chronicle," by an eye-witness.

The dress of a woman would at other times deceive them, and stalking with a horse would often succeed; and I have killed many a buck from a keeper's cart, the deer taking us for common wayfarers. In approaching deer, if they mistake you for a mere passer-by, the wind does not matter; they *see* you are a man, and they *expect* to scent you; but in creeping to them unseen the lightest air must be cared for, for if they wind a man and do not see him they are ever apprehensive that he has a design upon them. Many a deer have I made sure of, when he was about to trot or gallop by me, by a low short whistle. Not knowing there was a man near him, and hearing a noise so shortly given that its whereabouts could not be at the instant defined, the deer was sure to stop to ascertain, by listening for the sound again, that he was not running into danger, and then was the time for the shot. I have also been lying by several bucks on my face in the heather, unable to judge the best deer because they were also couched, and to raise them I have given a short sharp cry, not too loud; and in many instances the human voice, well regulated, will reach them enough to make them aware that a man is within hearing, without exposing his ambush or sending them away. When they rise

to look about them, then is the time for choice. Occasionally this plan fails; for if the voice reaches them too distinctly, they bolt off with their haunches to the danger, and a shot cannot be taken.

When the deer were very shy at the commencement of October, I wanted a good buck, and took a great deal of trouble to get him. After searching the forest all day, I discovered a herd of about thirty deer, and among them some of the best bucks left in the vicinity of Burley Lodge; but they were all on a little narrow lawn, feeding or lying down in the midst of short heather, with not a bush to screen the stalker. It was a gusty day, with occasional showers; the wind being high was much in my favour. It was a long and a wet stalk I had to make, crawling through the wet heather; when the sun came out I lay still, when it blew and rained, then crawled on again. The heather was scarce above my back, however low I kept it, and in some places, to keep out of sight, I was obliged to crawl on my breast. Now and then a little suspicious and capricious doe would look about her; once she either caught sight of my shoulder or a motion in the heather, and stared for about ten minutes right at me, but I lay on my face with an occasional peep between the roots, and so long as her forehead and erect ears were visible I remained still. She at last also lay down, and then, when I looked up, nothing could be seen of the herd but the broad palmated tops of the old buck's horns.

"Now is the time," I thought, and on I crept, re-

solved not to cease from an endeavour in this cramped position, wet as I was, till I got within shot. I peeped up again, and found myself within fifty yards of the herd, all of them very quiet and lying down close together, their haunches to the wind and their heads obliquely towards me, so close that not even a head was fair without endangering other deer. I lay for at least half an hour, in the hope that some would rise and feed, but not a deer stirred. Seeing them so quiet I moved on again, and this time so far that, before raising my head, the deer being forward for the time of year, I could scent them. I now took off the handkerchief I had wrapped round the lock of my rifle, and put on a fresh cap, lying on my side to do it; and I did not look at the deer again till I had recovered my breath, and any little excitement of the heart that position and nerve had occasioned. When I peeped up I found myself scarce thirty yards from the deer, with seven or eight old bucks next me lying close together. I was cool by that time, and, in fact, getting cold, wet through as if I had swam the distance.

Too close to attempt to raise them with my voice, I lay watching them, and at last perceived that one of the oldest heads among them never stirred anything but its ears, never rested along the ground, and never turned either way to knock off the flies. I had plenty of time in which to mark this peculiarity, and fixed my eyes on the head to know the reason why it did not move like others. At last I could see a dark spot below the right ear, in the neck, and satisfied myself

that the deer I looked at had been hit by a ball. He might therefore have wasted, and not be the best deer. I could in that position judge nothing of the venison; but, thinking that he would get worse, my duty to the Crown made me resolve to kill him. Waiting therefore a long time for the other heads to go this way and that way at the flies, or to stretch out to rest on the grass, an opportunity arrived, and I fired.

Up sprang the herd. My ear told me it was all right; and as deer will at times do when so suddenly scared, they ran, and then paused for a moment at the distance of a hundred yards, when one of their number reeled among them, gave a violent spring, and crashed to the ground, ploughing up the turf with his horns; away went the herd, springing from their dying leader in all directions, and I hastened up to give the *coup-de-grâce*. The buck was dead when I arrived, for the ball had struck above the old wound, nearer the horn, in a more deadly place, and had settled the matter. He was a very old buck, had been one of the best on the walk, but had wasted a little in the last two or three days on account of the wound of a very small bullet, but was, nevertheless, a very good deer.

On the morning of the same day I had killed a fine old buck, but wasted to nothing, a small rifle bullet having been lodged in his flank. I was creeping among some very high furze used by the browse bucks, near the keeper's lodge, and all at once came in sight of a fine old antler, sticking upright in the

gorse. I knelt down to stare at it; it remained perfectly still, and I felt sure that if the owner of it was alive he would nod at the flies, however slightly, and presently the horn did so. But where was the other horn? I wanted to see that to enable me to guess his head, for at that distance, with both horns in view to the brow antlers, I could have done so. Thus we were for half an hour, the horn and myself, the owner of the one still suspicious, and myself fearing to move lest he should bolt off. I could see nothing of his body, but it was a beautiful antler.

Tired of suspense, I ventured to raise myself a little, with the rifle at my shoulder; he saw the motion, and raised his head to ascertain what caused it, so much so that I saw the stump of the other antler and the top of his forehead, through which I sent the ball and killed him on the spot. The magnificent deer had been ill used, for not only had his antler been shot away by a powerful bullet, but there was a smaller one lodged in his flank, from the internal mischief of which he had become a mere skeleton.

"Sad work," I said to myself; "and no man ought to shoot a deer in the forest without a bloodhound within call." Such as old "Ashley" used to be, who might be trusted to sweep the "slots" of a flying herd if one of the number had been shot at, and to return at once to heel if the herd contained not a wounded deer.

During my sport in the winter of 1865, I assisted my friend, Mr. Weld, to close his shooting season at Lul-

worth Castle, and there again I met with a sudden and extraordinary friendship from an old retriever whom I had never previously seen—he was a very handsome red, curly-coated, large dog, evidently a cross from what is called the Irish Water Spaniel. From the yelling of boys as beaters beneath the walls of the Castle, the old dog anticipated a day's shooting, so when I went forth after breakfast, I found him seated on the top of the steps of the chief entrance to the Castle. The moment he saw me he came up and examined me minutely—indeed, testifying so much pleasure that it attracted the attention of Sir Bouchier Ray, who was with me. I thought that it arose from a guess of the dog's that I was to be one of the shooting party, but I did him injustice; his attention was addressed individually to me, and when I reappeared with my gun I found my canine friend in close attendance.

The old dog never left me all day, paying no attention to owner or keeper; he was constant to my heel; nor did he care for the report of any gun but mine. His only wish seemed to be to pick up the game I killed, and to bring it to me in so safe a way as never to hurt a feather. He obeyed every sign I made more than my whistle or call, for he was rather deaf, and the duty of a retriever better done I have seldom if ever seen. His most difficult task was in retrieving a woodcock, who, wounded, flew from him the first time, but which he marked down and then recovered. I was told that he was sometimes wilful, and would not always accompany the shooters, therefore his

conduct in regard to me was the more peculiar and interesting.

What a cold—but as far as any sporting profit can be derived from the severity of the hour—what a sportless winter this one of 1864-5 has been! Here, in the vicinity of the long-famed Poole Harbour, there has been no number of fowl, and the few there have been bred in England, or have come to our shores, can find room and shelter for themselves in preserved waters; therefore, our public inlets from the ocean to the coast, in this vicinity, have displayed little to repay the heavy shoulder gun or the oar and swivel in the punt. We must, however, be prepared for this—it is the scarcity of fowl, one of those sporting losses that must gradually attend the increase of man.

I remember, in harder weather than this of the year 1865, being engaged to shoot wild fowl with Lord Malmsbury on the Avon, and to meet him at the little public-house called "The Queen," at the village of the same name as the river. It was, indeed, a cold snowy morning, the sleet as hard in substance as particles of glass, driven by a stormy northerly blast, that searched every button-hole in your jacket, cut your face, and seemed to say, "Go home." The ditches were filled with snow, and the roads opposite every gateway in the hedges choked by drift stained with dust from the ploughed lands. Nevertheless, my hat crushed over my brows, I went to keep our appointment, for the weather, for those who could stand it, promised low flights and many flocks of fowl.

Every little boy that met me on the way had blue cheeks and a red nose, with muffles to the chin of worsted comforters. Truant they seemed to be in some cases, tarrying from school to slide on the ponds, or more unnecessarily on the footpaths, to the great risk of red-cloaked old women. Not a sparrow on the cottage thatch, where the chimney's warmth had thawed the snow, that did not seem to have his great coat on, so bluffed out were the feathers, and not a frozen-out duck who did not glance up at the icicles hanging to the roof, and quack a prayer for rain.

Farm-yards looked comfortable in their deep bright yellow heaps of straw, newly flung from the barn-doors, and pigs thatched themselves with it, as Mr. Bright once advised the yeomanry of England to do, on the question of free trade in corn, while they (the pigs) rooted beneath for any fallen grain. Cocks and hens sat with drooping tails under the sheds. All windows were closed; the panes of glass frosted from the breaths inside; and in all houses containing large families a coughing chorus was kept up by every mother's son and daughter. Twins hooped a duet. The father or grandfather, out of work or too ill to go to it, coughed an occasional bass solo, and not a soul seemed able to speak, save the good wife who had the care of all.

When my red retriever, Jessie, and myself got out of our little shooting-carriage we were cold indeed, and looked as if we had been sugared for a Christmas

present. Horse to the stable; man and dog to the settle by the fire.

"No, my good Mrs. Carey," I exclaimed, for she was leading the way to a little cold parlour with a fire just lighted, "not there. The kitchen chimney-corner, if you please, for that is warm, and with a blazing hearth and red-hot turf. Bring me your little round table, a glass of hot 'dog's nose,' gin and beer with sugar, and a toast in it, white with creamy froth as if in derision of the snow; and then I'll be thawed by the time Lord Malmsbury comes."

Down then we sat, almost in the fire, Jessie and I, to enjoy our toast and ale; the two heavy John Mantons, their snowed-on covers taken off, airing themselves in the warmth, and reflecting the ruddy glow of the fire on their barrels brightened now by age.

In came a labouring man.

"My good fellow, I cried," "shut the door; the very snow is running after you."

"Cold morning, sir," was the reply. "Pint of beer, mum."

It was bolted in no time, and off the rustic went, flapping his arms like a windmill.

"Dash that door; there's the latch again."

The latch did lift, and more than once, with a timid and cautious sound. At last, after keeping me in suspense, the door opened just enough to admit a head, in strong contrast to the surrounding hues. It was a queer-looking black head, garnished

with some grizzled wool. A feeble voice begged permission to come in for a warm.

"No!" was mine hostess's sharp and repellant reply, as she bustled towards the door to push it to. "This is no place just now for the like of you," alluding to my presence and the expected arrival of Lord Malmsbury.

The poor darkie, thus rudely shut out, crossed before the window beside the door, and a more wretched-looking, half-clothed, wholly-starved negro I never saw. A few rags only hung about him, leaving his chest, head, and feet bare, and they had been nipped by the intense frost to an inflammatory blue and ferruginous brown.

As he passed the window, he threw upon the flickering casement, ruddy with the fire, a longing and an imploring glance, and as he did so his eyes met mine. Jumping up and opening the door, I called to him to return. He paused for an instant in indecision, having indistinct and confused notions, probably, less of charity than of the cage.

"Come here, my good fellow," I cried. He obeyed. Pointing to a place near the fire, I bade him be seated by my little table, my finger held up to check the angry growls of Jessie; and then, not more to the astonishment of the poor black than of the hostess, I bade the latter dress up another pot of hot "dog's nose," the same as my own, and place it before the negro, with a plate of bread and cheese.

The poor fellow's astonishment at being comfortably entertained on the spot whence he had lately

been so inhospitably expelled was beyond description. It seemed as if words were denied him. However, after rubbing his hands at the fire, to use a very expressive phrase, he began to pitch into the viands so unexpectedly set before him—sipping his hot brew, and lifting his eyes to me every now and then with a timid look of the most heartfelt thanks; the once dreaded hostess, too, waiting on him with the greatest assiduity; Jessie even condescending to beg a piece of cheese.

God forgive me for many a harsh word hastily spoken to a poor man. The food I thus bestowed on this negro was no atonement for them on my part; for I do not hesitate to say that I had as much pleasure in watching this houseless, lonely, wretched man eating heartily, and being kindly treated, as I afterwards had in the day's wild-fowl shooting. It cost me but little; indeed, I had not much to give. But, reader, believe me when I say that the shilling so laid out gave me infinitely more happiness than the expenditure of many a five-pound note.

Here I must be permitted to say a few words respecting the friend in whose society in England and in Scotland I have passed some of the happier hours of my life. With him, in society or in conversation *tête-à-tête*, I certainly never knew a dull moment, nor did he ever fail, when I applied to him, to advise me in a difficulty.

Lord Malmsbury is one of the best shots at deer, game, and wild fowl I ever saw, and when at Achnacarry in the Highlands he was fortunate in the pos-

session of a smooth-bored double-shot gun, that could carry a ball as true as the best rifle of the day, without the monstrous confusion of setting sights for different distances. Never shall I forget, cold and wet though the day was, when Malmsbury, Edward Thynne, Captain Dashwood, and myself set forth after the "Monster Stag" of "Corrie Vortght," which was reported to have been seen that morning, lying in a portion of the glen, where, by driving and manning the different passes, a shot at his splendid side might be attained.

Commencing the ascent of the hills on the side of "Loch Lochy" on our ponies, beyond us to the left, towering above his fellow-mountains, "Ben Nevis" reared his monarch brow; though not, as Byron said of "Mont Blanc,"

> "With forests braced
> Around my waist,"

still he had "a diadem of snow," bearing, above all neighbouring hills, up as it were to the gates of heaven, in that position so mysteriously displayed, the sign of the Cross, by which the mountain becomes at once known to the eyes of the gazing stranger. This symbol, though traced in unsullied snow, glitters impervious to the beams of the summer sun, and continues imperishable throughout the year.

When looking at this suggestive emblem, no voice from the pulpit ever spoke to my soul as did that lonely cross on high, when viewed, as I describe, in the profound solitude of nature.

Having attained the summit of "Ben Vain," we suddenly missed our head forester, "Stuart," whom, leaving us to ourselves, though every moment's delay was dangerous to our success with the stag, we saw down on his knees at a little spring, devouring a peculiarly small sort of cress which grew in it. He had been assured by a Highland Esculapius that, "as long as he or any man could *daily* pluck and eat this cress he would *never die.*" In my opinion the doctor was a wag, because no one but a man with the vigorous use of his limbs, could reach this spring in a day.

After this refreshment, not over pleased by the needless delay, Lord Malmsbury directed Stuart to proceed to the head of the quarry to glass the deer, which having been done, the latter returned with the glad tidings, that "the muckle hart lay beneath a craig in an excellent position for the drive."

Having gained another site, we then drew lots for the choice of passes left vacant when Malmsbury had selected one, and, with my usual luck on such occasions, I drew the most unlikely pass of all, exposed as it was too in the top of the mountain to the bitter wind and rain, against which I was not very well provided.

As to shelter or hiding-place there was none, so I laid down on the wet hill, by the side of a grey stone, to see what luck St. Hubert might have in store for me, and praying that I might see the tops of the antlers peer over the edge of the quarry. The long and the short of it all was, the stag was not in the

quarry, or he must have made his exit by one pass or the other, and I have doubts as to whether Stuart actually saw him or only thought he did; if he saw him, the stag must have caught our wind and left his "lair" before the passes were manned.

During Lord Malmsbury's occupation of Achnacarry this stag was not killed, and the superstitious Highlanders had begun to look serious and shake their heads, and liken him to "the awfu' stag of Gusa," who, in the mountains of Lochiel, reformed the "wicked shepherd." Their story of the "Gusa Stag" ran thus—

The shepherd was a lawless loon, and among other delinquencies killed game and deer, and some said occasionally a sheep, upon his own account, and not on his master's. When remonstrated with by better disposed cottars, he vauntingly told them "to hold their blether." "He dinna care, he'd do as he always had done; and if the de'il in his ain sell took to stalking, and wanted all the fun to his ain share, he'd have his venison in spite of him. As to the Chief's family, he," the shepherd averred, "had as good a right to a deer as any Cameron in the world. For the rest on it let the de'il his ain sell come, he feared him not, for though sair misca'd in the world, he was the only hand at helping his friends at a pinch, and the de'il and his sell might share in a gude fat stag."

The very next day after the fellow had made this hardened declaration he went out in his usual occupation, that of tending his sheep, and narrowly scan-

ning the glen and corrie in the hope of sighting deer. The day was gloomy, gusts of restless wind seemed changefully to blow from every quarter of the compass, and the wail of tempests was heard roaring down distant corries, though, strange to say, their force on that day never reached the spot where the daring listener stood.

"Hoot," he cried in derision, "the wind whistles among the craigs of 'Corrie Glass,' and makes a din in its belly as if craving a drap o' whisky!"

The day wore on murky and dim without his seeing a deer, till just as it was waning into night his keen eye was attracted by an ill-defined red mass, down in a little dell not more than two hundred yards away. He almost started at the sight, for his eyes had scanned or cleared every inch of heather and craig for miles round, but there sure enough was a something red down, still and stationary in the Ling, but not a tyne nor a branching antler could he make out, although by an undefined something in its character, by its bulk and hue, he felt convinced that he looked on a stag; when all at once up rose the mighty monarch of the waste, gave himself a shake, turned back his head for a moment to lick one of his hinder legs, and then the wicked shepherd saw fully confessed before him a Royal Hart from Knoidart, with no more than a brow antler to his straight and towering horn.

It was a splendid stag, his body low, his haunches wide, and a back like a great beam, on which the spectator could have stretched himself to sleep.

The stag fed on quietly in the dell, the wind was right, so the shepherd, with an anxiously-beating heart, drew from beneath his plaid the barrel and stock of the poacher's rifle, and put them together, ready loaded as the barrel was. Off on his hands and knees he went, so as to keep low enough to prevent the supposed to be wary—and they were very wary—eyes of the Knoidart stag from seeing him; when on reaching a small knoll, not ten yards beyond which he thought the stag was feeding, he divided the heather gently with his hands to enable him to look through it, and, Heaven save the mark! *there* fed the mighty beast broadside on; and then it was that he discovered that while one antler branched off to the astounding fact of fourteen points to itself, the other antler was but the tall, straight attribute of the Knoidart deer. Then there was a head, *if he could get it*, most assuredly, under all circumstances, worth its weight in gold, let alone the fat and shaking sides that promised wealth of food.

As these curious antlers still kept down in the act of grazing, the wicked shepherd rose, without a jerk, to one knee, and aimed his rifle at the spine of the neck, not to hurt the symmetry of the splendid head. Scarce had his anxious finger felt for the ready trigger, when up with a toss went the stag's head, the large and steadfast eyes bent full upon him. Now or never was the time; but ere he could dismiss his ball, to his intense horror, instead of aiming at the head or neck of a deer, he found his sight upon the heart of a tall, dark man, with fire enough at play about

his head to have roasted a stag entire! The unexpected stranger clenched his uplifted and threatening hand, and "bade him to fire, *if he dared.*"

Down went the poacher, as if he himself had been shot, in a swoon, and on recovering his senses found his rifle broken in two lying beneath him, and neither stag nor stranger to be seen.

Like a scared and trembling ghost that night he reached his bothy; from which time he was never heard to swear; whisky and rifle, shot, gun, and theft, alike abandoned. He became a constant attendant in the Free Kirk, and so unwontedly sedate did he become, that to the end of his days he was pointed at by man, woman, and child, with the accompanying words of—"Eh! guid guide us; yonder gaes the mon that winna smile."

The mountains and lakes of Lochiel are splendid, but the forest is a poor one, and frequented chiefly by hinds. When the stags come they are waning in their season; and were I rich enough to hire a forest, Lochiel's would not be the one I should select.

There are the Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron in the library at Achnacarry, which would afford some interesting information, and in conjunction with "Clune's" Hill, and the cave wherein Prince Charlie was so long concealed, and the mountain where I have shot ptarmigan, and seen the small niche in the rock where the remains of a mattress were once found on which the Prince was said to have slept, would make a book of themselves.

It used to be the favourite boast of the ancient

chiefs that they could kill a stag and salmon from the drawing-room window; in the present chief's minority, Lady Vere Cameron fenced out the deer, and railed off the river as it rushes by the house, soon after its fall from Askegg, and effectually prevented the ancient boast of the former lairds from being put in force by their representative. Whether he has changed this lamentable state of things I know not; but no doubt he has done all that is gallant and graceful by the hills, lochs, and rivers of his forefathers. I was brigaded in the Guards with his father, for whom I always entertained the most sincere regard. May the rooftree ever flourish, and the wild scenes I have frequented with Lord Malmsbury be ever fair to view!

It was on Lochiel's mountains where Lord Malmsbury met with, very nearly, a serious accident from a "yeld" or dry hind, which he thought he had killed, but which the glancing ball had only knocked down, and for a moment stunned. On his laying down his rifle and drawing his knife to give the *coup de grâce*, she suddenly rose on her hinder legs, and meeting her assailant directly with a blow from her fore foot, such a blow as only a red deer can give, in the middle of the face, she just missed his eye and nose, and laying the face open to the bone, prostrated him on his back in a deluge of blood.

I once received a kick from a magnificent stag that I was taking with my hounds; his hinder foot struck me on the centre of the chest, and, luckily, on a stout stirrup leather slung around me in case

of need. The blow was terrific, and knocked me so speedily down that the back of my head was the part that first came in contact with my mother earth.

I have seen a stag kick his great hind foot clean through the muscular thigh of my poor dear greyhound Smut (of which of course she died), dividing the muscles as if a charge of shot from a cartridge had been fired through the limb; and when on my splendid thoroughbred hunter, once well known, while going at his full speed, a hunted stag turned short round in racing down a very narrow lane, so short that I could not pull Jack o' Lantern up, and both animals at their utmost speed met in violent collision.

The antlers of the deer had been sawn down to about a foot in length, and the brow tynes taken off, or the horse would have been killed. As it was, however, the force of the concussion very nearly knocked the horse backwards, while the deer rolled away beneath my foot, turning several times over. Half a pint or more of extravasated blood then gushed and lodged beneath the skin on the horse's chest, and it was, if I remember rightly, either two or three months before my best horse could be used again.

Heron Court, the seat of Lord Malmsbury, is to my mind a beautiful place. It is a comfortable house, and in perfect retirement and keeping. It was once the country house of the Abbot of Christchurch, that abbey having considerable property all round, in lands and fisheries. The great tithes are still in Lord Malmsbury's possession. It is, as all old houses

ever are, low in situation, and near three rivers, the Stour, the Little Stour, and the Moors river, and not far from the river Avon, up to the banks of which the estate extends. The rivers of course yield a variety of fish and wild fowl of various kinds, and the covers and lands every sort of game, from the blackcock, pheasant, and partridge, to the woodcock, snipe, and the hare and rabbit.

The father of the present Lord kept a journal of his sport for thirty-nine seasons, the grand summary of the bag as follows:—

Black game . .	184	Brought forward	26,728
Partridges . . .	9,331	Ducks	2,885
Quails	8	Widgeon . . .	122
Landrails . . .	118	Teal	1,371
Pheasants . . .	10,292	Other fowl . . .	389
Woodcocks . . .	1,387	Bitterns	22
Snipes	5,375	Hares	9,494
Wild swans . .	11	Rabbits	14,990
Wild geese . .	22		
Carry forward	26,728	Total . .	54,802

In forty seasons, to his own gun, viz., from 1798 to 1840, the late Lord bagged 38,442 head of the various kinds.

Lord Malmsbury, since his father's death, still keeps a game book, so that each day's sport can at any time be referred to; a thing which every owner of manors should invariably do.

There is no man of my acquaintance who can tell a story so well as my noble friend, or with more quiet and humorous effect; and I am indebted to

him for one primarily narrated by Lord Wemyss, who was the real hero of the adventure.

Roxburghshire once contained a sporting blacksmith, who was famed in his locality for successful wild-goose stalking. He not only did get up to his birds, but he almost always got his goose, and no doubt as certainly cooked it. Having heard of this sporting smith's reputation, Lord Wemyss paid him a visit, in order to gain some information as well as to gratify his curiosity; and among other things asked him how and to what extent he charged his gun, and, as there were flocks of wild geese about, if he could not show him a stalk, as he had a desire to learn.

The blacksmith, nothing loth, abandoned his bellows, and from a corner of the well-begrimed shop produced, from a heap of old iron, as rusty as the firearm, an old bell-muzzled gun, six feet long in the barrel, and not much above six inches long in the stock, so that the monstrous hammer, with a huge flint like a paving stone in it, when at full cock touched the nose of the gunner, which otherwise rested on the thumb of his right hand. Having possessed himself of his weapon, the smith then went to a large flower-pot, with a piece of rag stuffed in the bottom, which stood ready and in questionable safety not far off from the forge. Into this he dived, in a promiscuous manner, his very extensive hand, and produced it again with the palm full of powder; and this he trickled down the long gun, concluding with a wipe of his hands on his breeches.

Having cleaned his hand after this fashion, upon the powder he rammed down a thick wad of brown paper, hitting it as hard as if it were a red-hot nail. This done, the hand and arm again dived into a promiscuous heap of ashes, fragments of old iron, and heads of nails; when, having grasped as many of such missiles as his four fingers and thumb could compass, the entire lot of these pointed, three-cornered, and incongruous remnants—not any of them round in the least degree—were dropped in upon the powder, again to be crammed in and rammed in with a wad of brown paper, till eventually the height of the charge within was only exceeded by the tallness of the instrument without; and then the smith and gunner felt himself a match for a flock of geese, assuring Lord Wemyss, who viewed him in some consternation, that such missiles were infinitely more deadly than shot—a fact, as far as the puller of the trigger was concerned, his Lordship had no doubt about whatever.

"Come on, my Lord," the smith then cried; "there's a flock of geese on the wilds, and I'll show you how I deals with 'em."

For a short distance they proceeded in company, Lord Wemyss no doubt trusting that no sort of explosion would take place while he was within five hundred yards of what he had witnessed go down the bell muzzle. On and on they went till a flock of geese were seen, and then came the time for them to part company, Lord Wemyss for the higher ground to watch the sequel, with mingled ideas as to which

would be more likely to be in request—a surgeon or a historian for man or goose.

Nothing could be better, more gentle, more observant, more wily, or more sportsman-like than the way in which the smith stalked, crept, and crawled to within distance of the geese, and to an easy distance. Not content with being well within shot, however, the blacksmith continued to crawl on, till Lord Wemyss had some notion that it was the intention of the stalker to arrest the attention of the leading gander to a sense of danger by a thrust from the old bell muzzle.

At the distance of about thirty yards the smith composed himself for a shot, and, after aiming for about ten minutes, an enormous report resounded through the air. A volume of dense smoke arose simultaneously with the confused geese, whose cacklings were of the most terrific kind, while one or two of the flock were left fluttering on the ground.

For a moment or so all else was invisible; but a puff of wind clearing the smoke away, at last Lord Wemyss with some difficulty made out the prostrate form of his friend motionless on the ground, apparently with less of life in him than the two crippled birds.

Fearing the most fatal consequences, and that the gun, in all probability, had burst, Lord Wemyss hastened to the spot. The smith was still insensible, and the gun standing on its bell muzzle in the mud a few yards from him. In a few minutes, however,

consciousness began to return, favoured by the bleeding from his nose, when the first words the smith uttered were, "Wal dune, old gal," looking round for his gun—which exclamation being taken by his Lordship for the wandering of a brain after concussion, he very nearly started off to call assistance; but on seeing that the face of the man every half second grew more intelligent, his Lordship cut across his supposed incoherency with the question of "how could you expect even to be alive after firing off such a dangerously crammed instrument of universal destruction?"

The smith, crawling up to his gun, and eyeing it with intense and affectionate satisfaction, patted it on the stock. "Wal, my Lord," he said, "noo doubt she's pratty full of destruction to the fowl, but she's used me wal this time; it mostly tacks twenty minutes gude afore I comes to myself after letting her off—but *I always gets my guse.*"

I know of no place equal to Heron Court as to the smaller kinds of wild fowl, though it now but seldom gives a goose or a wild swan to the gun. Still it has every sort of duck, and around its rivers and manors the most rare specimens of the feathered race have been killed, as is shown by its collection of stuffed birds. The shooting which I prefer there, is when Lord Malmsbury and myself shoot some out lying beat on the wildest ground, when no one can tell at what kind of game or fowl the next shot may be. When shooting thus quietly together, I have seen as

even and as good sport as any two guns could make, and, for the ground, as large a bag.

At Berkeley Castle, alone, there is goose shooting to almost any amount, the flocks on the great grazing grounds, immediately on the banks of the Severn, at times amounting to seven or eight thousand head; but, though Berkeley beats Heron Court in this larger kind of fowl, the Heron Court bag of the duck tribes surpasses the Castle bag to the gun in many hundreds to one. In the two decoys at Berkeley, of course, many hundred ducks are taken. Under proper management there might be as much shooting at the lesser fowl at Berkeley as there is at Heron Court, and that, too, without in any way interfering with the decoys.

I must now request the reader to accompany me to "Burley Lawn," in the Royal New Forest, on a brilliant afternoon, at a time when deer were leaving the woods and thickets, and seeking on the velvet lawns the sweet fresh dewy grass, that even to me seemed a luxury, if but to lie down upon it. The beams of the sun had a long western slant, and rays of glorious light here and there, as they could pass between the interstices and glades opened out for their passage by the hawthorn trees that, in company with gorse, were dotted in little groves or in single bushes all around, made the short pasture blush again, or through relieving shadows, induced a brighter gleam on places touched with gold.

It was a lovely scene, such as the ill-used forest can

no longer show, and the dappled deer, with their many-twinkling "singles" wagging at the flies, added to its sylvan beauty.

The forest-keeper, Holloway, then living at Burley Lodge, had assured me that several good bucks fed upon the lawn, so with him in company, and with my rifle in hand, we proceeded to the highest end of the scene next to Burley.

The wind, if I remember rightly, was from the south or south-east, and suited our position admirably; and we began a cautious advance by the side of the little brook, from bush to bush, and from thicket to thicket, taking care to sweep the ground well for fear of coming incautiously on a doe or fawn, whose startled "Boh," and rapid retreat, would have given the alarm over the entire length of the lawn on which I intended to kill a buck. After some little time, we made out several male deer, and discovered that on rather a wide, but sheltered lawn, fringed with thick groups of hawthorns on either side, bucks and does were on their feed, and scattered widely about, each intent on some fresh sweet grass, and apparently at rest, as far as any apprehension of danger was concerned.

Holloway and myself then sat down against the butts of some old hawthorns, screened also from view of the deer by a few tangled bushes, and then placing my rifle beside me, I scanned the age and condition of the male deer, and what chance there was of venison. In their present position, with the exception of a scattered doe or two and a pricket, there

was nothing like a venison deer within shot; however, by the way their heads were set and the method of their feed, it was evident to me that all the deer had entered the lawn from the side furthest from me, and they were slowly working in my direction. Among the bucks that were in view there were three fine deer, any one of which Holloway said was good; so on these deer I fixed my attention.

How picturesque was the group! There capered around us the young and frisky doe of two years old, who all day long had never deemed it necessary to hide in the thicker cover—for, unlike the bucks, she knew that no one wished her death. She had cropped the tenderest leaf or wild flower all day long, and therefore she could afford to gaze about her and to neglect the grass. Not so the bucks—their antlered heads were always down, and with only an occasional glance around, they trusted for their safety to the younger and more idle and vigilant does, and to other wild things around them, any one of which would have been sure to have telegraphed the approach of an intruder.

To the left, were picking about the grass five old blackcocks, their crimson-fringed and bright dark eyes permitting nothing to escape their attention; while nearer to the bucks, and more to the right, was a pert and active magpie, who looked askance at everything, and once, I thought, paused in his hopping, to direct his inquisitive bill towards the ambush I maintained.

The three bucks came gradually browsing on to-

gether; the nearer to me they approached, the nearer they closed on each other, till I had satisfied myself that there was one of the three a better deer than the others, and on him I kept my eye.

Oh, that accursed magpie! on he came too, as if in constant attendance on the deer, now this side of them, now that, now coming on without them, keeping me in dread that he would hop near enough to discover me before the deer was within range, and fair to the rifle for a venison hit, which must not be made anywhere except in the head and heart, or spine between head and shoulder.

"He's near enough now," I whispered to Holloway, "if he would turn aside and stand free of the other deer." For that chance I paused; I dreaded that magpie or the black game, for all were feeding this way; but the former restlessly hopped upon the back of the best deer, and while his curious eyes were searching every "pile" of the buck's coat for ticks, the height at which he sat assisted him to keep a look out for other things.

All at once, I suppose at about seventy yards, the buck, with the magpie on his back, turned broadside to me, and I whispered to Holloway to give me his shoulder for a rest. He instantly complied, but the fact made him so nervous, and he shook so, that I took aim without the rest, and struck the buck behind the shoulder, but not quite low enough to touch the heart.

At the noise of the rifle and blow of the ball on the buck, and at the sudden bound of the stricken

animal, the magpie flew into the air, and kicked his legs behind him as if his wings went not fast enough to carry him away. Holloway and myself jumped up and ran after the deer, for we both knew he had received a deadly wound, and we saw him drop among some rushes.

On reaching the spot I fancied I could judge his head by the antlers, which were in sight, and fired in that direction. The buck sprung up, but dying, paused and staggered, when Holloway shot him through the head. He was a good deer, but was not like some I have killed in other parks at Badminton, Taymouth, and Charborough, though for the New Forest very fair. It better pleased me, however, to kill an indifferent deer in that sweet wild forest than in the tamer scenes of artificial parks.

CHAPTER VII.

COTERIES AND PETTI-COATERIES.

"Sets" in society—Swells and swell makers—Stultz and Poole—Clubs — Pic-nics — Calves' heads — Crockford's — The Alpine Club—Royal Yacht Squadron—The Savages and Eccentrics—The Shakspeare and Garrick—Lord Palmerston at the Reform —Jockey Club—Working Men's Associations—Ladies' assemblies—Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire—Lady Holland—Lord Holland—Thomas Moore—The Rev. Sydney Smith and his hoaxes—Sir James Mackintosh—The Misses Berry—Lady Charleville and Lady Cork—Holdernesse House re-unions—Lady Jersey's retort-courteous.

SOCIETY is constantly being broken up into sections; every planet in the heavens moves in its appropriate orbit, and every social star in its particular "set." This favours cliquism, and often fosters prejudice, for the set is pretty sure to be marked by exclusive ideas, not only as regards sociality, but politics, religion, and taste. To be sure, if a lot of people choose to run in a groove, however narrow, they are at perfect liberty to do so; but there is nothing to justify them in looking down upon, or ignoring the rest of the world for preferring other modes, or a wider path of locomotion.

A small coterie of dandies in my youth formed a remarkable example of this assumed superiority.

The Prince of Wales gave them an elevation they could not have gained without his Royal Highness's countenance, for, as is well known, he had a weakness in the way of desiring to be thought a fashionable model, that led him to direct not only his own apparel, but the uniform of the cavalry regiment he commanded, the officers of which, all very good fellows, were notoriously the greatest swells in England.

Where are they all, those funny fellows who found the pavement of Bond Street far too narrow for the display of their greatness, as with eye-glass raised to identify the inmates of a passing carriage, or stare at a pretty woman on the opposite side of the fashionable thoroughfare, they lounged towards the fruit-shop or the confectioner's, and then, with the same overpowering self-sufficiency, lounged back to Brooke's or White's!

We all know the sad fate of their leader—the aristocratic dandies have passed out of the peerage, and the minor satellites have sunk into oblivion. A few years ago I used to meet somewhere about the "sweet shady side of Pall Mall," a lean, shuffling, haggard-faced figure with rouged cheeks and a youthful wig, in a queer hat, and a long-skirted coat, leaning on a cane and nearly bent double as he went slowly on his way. He was the last of the dandies—the sole survivor of that once glorious coterie immortalized by the genius of Cruikshank.

And what has become of the matchless coat—the irreproachable cravat, the exquisite hat, the superla-

tive waistcoat, the marvellous breeches, and the miraculous boots! It would be thought too ridiculous to dress up a Fifth of November Guy in such absurdities. Monmouth Street has turned its back upon their trim long ago, and Rag Fair would scarcely condescend to give them house-room. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

The fashioners of such wonderful apparel, whose rule at the West End was unlimited, and whose bills were more monstrous even than their goods, what has become of them? Stultz realized a fortune that made him almost a Rothschild among snips—and, like his countryman, was created a Baron—any part of a man apparently will do for nobility in Germany. The rest have also retired from business, and their tombstones testify to the amount of credit they received—many a ruined heir could have furnished a much more trustworthy memorial of the credit they gave. Their place knows them no more—Poole has superseded Stultz, and Buckmaster (appropriate name) has, in the phraseology of trade, "cut out" Towell.

Those anti-domestic institutions known as *clubs* have greatly fostered the formation of coteries in London society. We have had them of every kind, and formed upon every variety of pretext. Some have a mere mushroom existence, others flourish far beyond the age that first produced them. In the first I must name "the Kit Kat," whose name survives only in a canvas of a certain size prepared for painting, used for the portraits of the original mem-

bers—these have been engraved and published, and represent many of the distinguished men of the reigns of Queen Anne and George I.

More recent was the origin of "the Pic-nics"—a society of fashionables formed for the enjoyment of *al fresco* entertainments—the members drawing in a lottery what they were to furnish. The name still survives for out-of-door refections. The Beef-steak Club had its origin in an extemporized banquet provided in the painting-room of one of the theatres, and grew to be so fashionable a repast that men of the highest position were glad to share in it, and wore, as a cognizance of their membership, a small silver gridiron at their button-hole.

The Calves-head Club was a republican form of commemorating the death of Charles I. I do not remember any other eating fraternity in England, unless I am allowed to include the pisciculturists, who patronize fish dinners; but in France there is a club that emulate the Tartars in their preference for horse-flesh.

As the only really drinking club that exists, I name the tee-totallers; but I can well remember when the bond of social union consisted of a very different beverage. Two and three-bottle men were far from uncommon, and the convivial meetings were unanimous in their devotion to "the flowing bowl," "the ruby wine," "the jolly good ale and old," or whatever other drink happened to be praised in a favourite song. In short, in all the associations in-

stituted for the cultivation of good fellowship, the imbibing a liberal quantity of fermented or distilled liquors was a necessity.

But clubs were formed for other purposes besides eating and drinking, and play became a source of attraction. It was in such places that Fox and Selwyn gambled away large fortunes. Even with a common recreation the coterie spirit prevailed. A Whig would not lose his money among Tories, and a Tory would consent to be plundered only by fellows of his own set. Therefore White's and Brooke's remained exclusive.

Crockford's was established to insure the highest attainable degree of luxury in living, and facilities for play with the utmost security to the players. It was at first extremely successful; among the early members were many of the nobility, in short, every man of any standing in society; and when I was elected, it was in my opinion as good a place to dine at, and insured associates as agreeable as could have been found in any house in London.

The objects of clubs are very various. Some are professional, others connected by a favourite recreation. Of the former, there is the United Service, as an example; but here there are subdivisions; the general officers, admirals, and the higher grades of the army and navy not choosing to associate with their subordinates, the Junior United Service was instituted. These two not sufficing for the occasion, the "Naval and Military" was organized—otherwise known by the derogatory title of "the Rag and

Famish." Then "the Guards," I much regret to say, do not care to mix with the Line, and "the Volunteers" are not sufficiently professional to find a place among officers of the regular army—consequently each has a club of its own. There used to be a Navy Club in Bond Street, but Copeland's china warehouse has taken its place, the few "old salts" who supported it to the last having, it is to be hoped, gone aloft.

Of such societies brought together by a common pursuit, there are many. Of recent origin is "the Alpine Club," a set of mountain-climbers, totally distinct from "the Travellers," an older institution, about which I may probably have something to say in another chapter. Then there is the Royal Yacht Squadron, the members of which sail their own vessels in any seas they can reach; and the Thames Yacht Club, who rarely leave the river. Of the former, Cowes is the rendezvous, whence the more ambitious, and of course the better seamen, take their craft east, west, north, and south. The Mediterranean is the favourite cruise; but Norway, for its salmon fishing, and as far north as Spitzbergen has often been reached. Lord Dufferin and Mr. Lamont have published accounts of their adventures among thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice, and not a season passes without some of these amateur navigators penetrating with their smart craft into the Adriatic and the Bosphorus, daring the storms of the Black Sea, and even risking a passage across the boisterous Atlantic.

Among clubs of recent formation is one called "the Savages," not a reproduction of the once terrible "Mohawks"—ruffians who used to scour the streets more than a century ago, committing every kind of brutality upon unoffending persons who had the misfortune to fall in their way, nor yet a return to the primitive life of what heralds represent as the "savage man proper."

They pretend not to be savage men proper or improper—merely a community of authors and artists who are amateur actors. Possibly some of the members may be critics, hence the title. I can understand its appropriateness if applied to certain writers who never give quarter to a rival, and scalp him when he can make no resistance; but the claim to savagery of the harmless individuals who imitate Buckstone and Macready with a charitable object, is not made out. Some wiseacre gave a derivation from the unfortunate poet of that name, but forgot the resemblance. However, the hardest thing that could be said of these savages is that, for persons who profess so wild a life, some at least are singularly tame.

Many years ago there used to assemble at a tavern near St. Martin's Lane a lot of individuals who called themselves "Eccentrics." They met of an evening, and the ordinary amusement was a mock trial, after the manner of that with which the self-styled *Judge* Nicholson made us more than sufficiently familiar. The assembly was a mixed one; a few clever men, and the rest mere idlers. "Sir and Brother," was the form of address of the members to each other, if my

memory does not fail me; but they drank their grog, ate their kidneys, and shared in the conversation, without betraying more eccentricity than the ordinary frequenters of Evans's, or any similar place of resort.

We have had clubs, too, founded in honour of some time-honoured personage, such as Pitt, Fox, Shakspeare, and Garrick. The first two are assemblages of Tories and Whigs—*pure et simple*—the last two, of course, theatrical. I scarcely know whether the Shakspeare Club still exists. Thirty years ago it was only a private association of admirers of the great dramatist, who met on certain evenings, and also entertained themselves with mock trials, in which Douglas Jerrold and William Godwin (son of the author) displayed much talent.

As for "the Garrick," every one knows the headquarters of the heroes of the sock and buskin—that house of call for dramatic critics—that "rest and be thankful" for general mediocrity. It includes every description of man, from eminent tragedians down to insignificant lords—always living together in the most free and easy manner possible, till somebody's dignity is touched too rudely—and then, ye gods! the disturbance that ensues!

There are rowing as well as sailing clubs—cricket and golf clubs, *et sic genus omnes*—there are anglers' clubs, resembling the one which boasted of the immortal Mr. Pickwick; coursing clubs, and those who support subscription packs of hounds, may be regarded as members of hunting clubs. There are sparrow

clubs in rural districts—stupid farmers who wage a merciless war against the small birds which keep down the insects that prey on growing crops—and goose clubs, town mechanics chiefly, who pay a small sum weekly to insure a savoury dinner at Christmas—the late Lord Fitzhardinge, in his later years, belonged to one of them! "The Carlton" must be regarded as the head-quarters of the Tory party, though "the Conservative" contains members who differ in opinion from them by scarcely a shade. "The Reform," on the contrary, is an amalgamation of Whigs and Radicals, where extremes not only meet but drink—as long as their exponents can afford to pay the charges of the club.

Here Lord Palmerston was to be found, genial and jocose enough to satisfy the humour of the most reckless of his Irish followers, and the next minute so eminently practical and earnest as to win the confidence of the grimmest of Scotch economists. Here John Bright sits stout and stolid, whenever he can find listeners, upholding the perfection of "the Model Republic," and debating on the super-excellence of Manchester goods (power-loom carpets especially) and free trade, until he walks forth to the streets, smoking a cigar.

"The Jockey Club" is an institution that deserves a more extended notice than I can give it here. It is a society of noblemen and gentlemen interested in the sport of horse-racing; whose duty it is to see the laws and regulations respected which have been passed for its proper conduct. Without such check,

fair-play at races would be out of the question, and the distinguished patrons of the turf, and breeders of racers, would be at the mercy of the over sharp-witted or nefarious gamblers in horse-flesh, who infest every course where a great stake can be gained or a flat taken in.

The professional jockeys are occasionally very difficult to manage, but lately the club has been in hot-water with the reporters—at least with one. Mr. John Mills—"Vates" of the "Morning Post"—in one of his reports made a little too free with the names of some of the members, which they resented by excluding him from the ring, where the respectable betting men were allowed to congregate. A law suit to try his right of way to the favoured spot followed, and after much litigation and bother, the Club became convinced that they had been too hasty, and "Vates" was permitted to prophesy and report what he liked and where he liked.

Incipient orators have their "Debating Clubs"—ambitious artists their sketching and etching clubs—there are building clubs for the thrifty, and burial clubs for the sick and dying—coal and blanket clubs for the needy, and book clubs for the intellectual. In short, the principle of association is made to meet every want, every gratification, and every whim.

These are, for the most part, for the middle and upper classes of society; but the same desire for belonging to distinctive coteries prevails among the lower orders. "The Trades Unions" are simply combinations of labour against capital, and are often

mischievously directed, especially when carrying out "strikes," or supporting the claims of some frothy demagogue to a seat in Parliament.

"The Mechanics' Institutes," which were established to effect such wonderful benefits for the working man, have proved failures in almost every instance. Libraries of excellent books were collected for his intellectual recreation; but the few who cared to read after their day's toil asked for "The Adventures of Dick Turpin," or "The Seven Champions of Christendom," in preference to Lord Brougham's "Discourse on the Pleasures and Advantages of Science," or Sir John Herschel's "Outlines of Astronomy." The rest very shortly neglected books and lectures for a quiet pipe and a game at knock-em-downs at their favourite beer-shop.

Working men's clubs have been established, both in town and country, where reading and lectures are the chief attractions; but the publications encouraged have generally been of a low class of literature, and the entertainments of anything rather than that of an elevating character. Their more respectable supporters affect to mourn this want of judgment; but, with rare exceptions, this is what must be looked for.

The clubs most patronized are "the Foresters," "the Druids," and "the Odd Fellows." They are all ostensibly provident clubs, in which the payment of a weekly sum is to secure the subscriber or his family support when he shall be out of

employ, in sickness, or after his decease. But as the meetings are, with few exceptions, always held at a public-house, he is generally led into expenses for which the comforts of those he leaves at home have to be curtailed. Then the annual gatherings and excursions rarely induce either to economy, morality, or health.

In the days of rampant Radicalism a fling at stars and garters from a mob orator was sure of uproarious applause; but, in a Foresters' fête, it is amusing to see the popular appreciation of rosettes and sashes. Members so decorated are evidently the envy of the rest; but the portly landlords of taverns where the lodges are held, who array themselves in gaudy cotton-velvet jerkins, and theatrical boots, leggings, and plumed hats, like burlesque Caspars and Zamiels from a transpontine "Der Freischutz," are regarded (and apparently regard themselves also) as creatures of another sphere.

The destruction of a harmless balloon, and the discreditable scenes that often mark these monster assemblages, prove that the schoolmaster—of whom I used to hear so much about the commencement of my parliamentary career—has done nothing for these people. Indeed, from what I have observed of the influence of these and similar clubs for working men, I am quite certain that it would be much more to their advantage to put their money in the Post Office Savings' Bank. In the course of a few years the drink money and other expenses of the club

would accumulate to a fund which might help the mechanic or labourer effectually in getting on in life.

In this way society has been split up into coteries, till not unfrequently a man's ideas become so cramped by the limited area to which they are confined that he can scarcely venture to think out of it. Man, however, proposes, and woman disposes—to alter a well-known phrase. There have always been ladies possessed of considerable social as well as physical attraction, whose saloons have served as a neutral ground, where each opposing politician might slip out of his groove, and—

> "Take the goods the gods provide him,
> Charming Thais sitting beside him."

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, though, as is well known, an ultra-Foxite, did not object to receive persons belonging to the opposite camp if distinguished for talent, and willing to render themselves agreeable. This has been the policy of other female leaders of society since the days of the beautiful Duchess. Indeed, woman's true mission is to soften the asperities, and ameliorate the rivalries of the other sex. Politicians should leave their disputes behind them, when they cross a threshold graced by the influence of those social divinities.

After the Duchess came Lady Holland, but she was neither so accomplished nor so amiable, for she was extreme in her opinions, whether as regards

religion or politics. Nevertheless, there were very pleasant parties in Addison's more stately than comfortable house, in which the literary element was sure to be prominent.

Neither Lord nor Lady Holland entertained what deserved to be called religious opinions, and their political ones seemed to be based on an idolatry of the first Napoleon. The fact is, they were thorough partisans;—if the Government had been friends of the great Emperor, they would have abused him quite as much as they did Wellington.

Tommy Moore was petted for his lampoons against royalty and the principal members of the Cabinet; Washington Irving was cherished because he was an American—then regarded as the great model democracy, where peace and plenty reigned supreme, and taxes were never heard of; Mackintosh was made much of, in consequence of his defence of revolutionary France; Jeremy Bentham's Utopian theories, and Godwin's political visions, brought equal favour to their authors.

The Reverend Sydney Smith was a clergyman of the facetious school, midway between the extreme liberality of Rabelais, Walter de Mapes, Dean Swift, and Laurence Sterne, and the jocose absurdity of Rowland Hill and John Spurgeon. It is extraordinary what licence these divines have been permitted to take. I do not know, however, whether their worst offences in that way are not more excusable than the spiritual assumptions of their infinitely less

amusing brethren. I can laugh at the extravagances of our clerical merry-andrews, but the tom-fooleries of Brother Ignatius only excite my pity.

Sydney Smith was a Whig clergyman, who seemed ever anxious to hide his gown under a suit of motley. Wherever he went, his ambition was, apparently, not merely to set the table in a roar, but the chairs, the sideboard, and the family portraits. He was as successful a hoaxer as Theodore Hook, sparing neither sex nor age.

A young lady from the country—a near relation—who had come to town with her pretty head filled with exaggerated notions of people whose names she had met with only in the newspapers, while he was surrounded by his ordinary evening visitors, came up to him, and asked coaxingly to be told the names of the remarkable men, who, she was quite sure, were in the room.

"Certainly, my dear," was the prompt reply; "there are some very remarkable men here to-night. You see that gentleman talking to Mr. Smith?"

"Oh yes, cousin!"

"That is Hannibal. He lost his leg in the Carthaginian war."

The country cousin looked at the illustrious visitor with astonishment, and then turned her gaze upon the solemn face of her informant, then took another puzzled look at the English costume and features of the maimed Carthaginian General, who was a Mr. Wishaw.

"There," he continued, with an air of increased

importance, pointing to one of the superlatively fine gentlemen and after-dinner wits of that day, "that is Socrates, who you know had Plato for his disciple. I am sorry for your sake that Plato is not here to-night; but in this corner is no less a personage than Solon, the eminent lawgiver. Of course, you know Solon?"

The mouth of the fair rustic was now as wide open as her eyes, as she turned the latter from Luttrell to Leonard Horner. So comic was the expression of her mystification that the reverend hoaxer's gravity went, as sailors say, by the run, and he burst into one of his hearty laughs. This completely put an end to the perplexities of his dupe.

On another occasion, Sir James Mackintosh brought with him a young Highland ensign, overflowing with military enthusiasm; when introduced to his host, he eagerly caught at the familiar name, and presently asked in a whisper, "Is yon the great Sir Sydney?" His chaperon, who was sometimes more of a wag than an historian, answered promptly in the affirmative, and then lost no time in communicating to his friend the new honours with which he had been invested.

The reverend gentleman seized the opportunity, devoted himself to the highly-gratified subaltern, going through the siege of Acre with an ardour never exceeded by his namesake—in short, acting that hero so to the life, that the rest of his guests could with difficulty maintain a proper degree of seriousness.

The anti-climax came—the young Scotsman was

so greatly excited by the heroism of his new acquaintance that he insisted, at midnight, on running to fetch the piper of his regiment, to do honour to "the great Sir Sydney," and as neither host nor guests could appreciate such music—at any rate at such an unseasonable time—the party hastily broke up.

There are some people so intensely matter-of-fact that it is impossible to make them incredulous. Make the most extravagant assertions, and they will merely mildly express their surprise. Thus in an after-dinner conversation, the host at whose table I sat was talking of the then wonderful invention of hatching eggs by steam, when one of the guests turned to me, and asked if it was true, as he believed it was, "That the gizzard of a fowl grew *externally* beneath the wing?" Seeing that some one had been hoaxing him, I replied, "Of course, you can see that when the bird is roasted; but with reference to hatching by steam there is a fact which very few people are aware of—fowls *hatched by steam cannot be boiled; they will only roast.*" The Reverend Sydney Smith met with one of these simple-minded men at a dinner party in the country. With his customary recklessness, the former professed an earnest desire to "roast a Quaker"—the other knowing only his neighbour's sacred profession, looked horrified at the idea.

"Roast a Quaker!" he repeated, in a thrilling whisper, as if scarcely daring to give utterance to such a horrible intention.

"Yes—roast a Quaker," said the other, sharply.

"But do you consider, reverend sir, the torture it

would produce?" he asked, as if by way of remonstrance.

"I have considered everything," was the unfeeling reply; "the Quaker might suffer—there is, I think, no doubt of that—but possibly I am peculiar in my tastes; I have a great desire to roast a Quaker. *One*, however, would suffice."

This moderation by no means diminished the expression of horror in the face of "the friend of humanity," nor did it disappear at the sound of a general laugh from the surrounding guests, for it was clear that he had not the slightest idea of a joke. It was only when the reverend wit offered to abandon his ferocious intention, to show his regard for the prejudices of his new friend, and socially challenged him to a glass of wine, that his disturbed mind appeared to recover its equanimity.

As his friend Moore wrote of him—

"And still let us laugh, preach the world as it may,
Where the cream of the joke is, the swarm will soon follow;
Heroics are very fine things in their way,
But the laugh, at the long run, will carry it hollow.

Yes, Jocus, gay god, whom the Gentiles supplied,
And whose worship not even 'mong Christians declines;
In our senate thou'st languished since Sheridan died,
But Sydney still keeps thee alive in our shrines."

He survived to see his friends, the Whigs, flourish, and to partake of their prosperity, dying a Canon of Bristol, possessed of a handsome fortune, on the 22nd of February, 1845, notwithstanding that he had previously invested largely in American securities, out

of which he had been done by the swindling act of repudiation.

After-dinner conversation at Holland House was often singularly lively, and not unfrequently brilliant. How could it be otherwise, when there assisted at it some of the cleverest talkers of their age—not only wits, as they were deemed, such as Jekyll, Luttrell, Sheridan, and Sydney Smith, but scholars of high attainments, such as Mackintosh, Macaulay, and Wellesley. The host aided powerfully in maintaining "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," for, as is well known, Lord Holland possessed attainments which rendered his superintendence of such symposia eminently agreeable to his guests. Lady Holland, too, when she chose, was very amiable, occasionally, however, inclined to snub when in any way put out.

Tommy Moore, though a great favourite, once ventured to pay her a compliment out of season. "None of your Irish blarney, Mr. Moore," was the sharp reply, with a peculiar look, and the little poet immediately collapsed.

It is well known that Horace Walpole offered to share his rank, after he had become Earl of Orford, with one and then the other of two beautiful girls, for whom he had found a pleasant residence near Strawberry Hill; but not even to become a Countess would either accept him as a husband. After his death, his intimate association with them conferred so great a celebrity that, whether in town or country, their small residence was constantly thronged with

distinguished visitors. The coterie of which the Misses Berry were the centre of attraction included many men of high intellectual reputation, and as one at least of the sisters put forward literary pretensions, in several forms, her good looks were not permitted to lessen her reputation as a *belle esprit.*

Unfortunately, in due course, the young ladies became old ladies. Their countenances failed to win the same ready acceptance of their remarks, and the attempts at authorship—comedy, biography, illustrations of social life, &c. &c.—fell into neglect. Nevertheless, when far advanced in years, their Walpolian reputation continued to draw around them a circle, who could not fail to find interest in their recollections of the Lord of Strawberry Hill, and his brother wits of an extinct generation. Agnes, the younger, died first, at a good old age for a spinster, but Mary survived till she was nearly ninety. Three large volumes about them have just been published.

There were rival petti-coateries at Lady Charleville's, in Cavendish Square, and the Dowager Lady Cork's, in New Burlington Street; at some of the latter I have often been, but the old picturesque mansion in Kensington contrived to attract the most distinguished company. A more formidable rival was about to invade Lady Holland's dominion—like the two preceding, also an Irish lady—nearly at her own gate, whose vivacity and personal attractions drew away the old wits and fashionable diners out, and in their train all the most intellectual people in London.

There was another striking example of this petticoat influence flourishing simultaneously. This was exhibited at Holdernesse House, in Park Lane, where the lord of the mansion was a man of very eccentric characteristics that have been painfully exaggerated in some of his offspring. Gronow says, that when General Stewart was serving in the Peninsula, Wellington was made aware that a violent attack upon his conduct of the late campaign appeared in the "Morning Chronicle," then the oracle of the Whigs. Some inquiries were set on foot by Lord Wellington's friends in London, the result of which was that General Stewart was sent for to head-quarters, shown the original MS. of the newspaper attack in his own handwriting, by his indignant commander, and then sent back to England.

I do not know what authority Gronow has for such a statement, but nothing seems too extravagant to be believed of the late Lord Londonderry, for he succeeded to the title of his celebrated half-brother. He was intensely vain, and in the conviction that he was at the head of a powerful party, used to draw around him a few young members of Parliament who were ambitious of his notice.

His lady was about the proudest woman in the peerage, excessively well-bred, and fond of the best society. Consequently she gave *conversaziones*, *thés dansante*, balls, concerts, and *déjeûners*, for the "Morning Post" to chronicle, and the world in general to talk about. I think the best supper I ever saw in my life was at one of her balls.

She published, with the usual success attending such very distinguished authoresses, tours in Spain and to Constantinople. Later in life her ambition took another turn, and she made long orations to select assemblages of Durham colliers.

There is a story told that when a daughter of a distinguished contemporary, and rival in the world of fashion, committed what was thought a *mésalliance*, Lady Londonderry went in state to pay her dear friend a visit of condolence; and that as soon as something of a similar kind chanced in Holdernesse House, Lady Jersey, with exactly the same amiable motives, ordered her carriage and drove to Park Lane, to repay the compliment with interest.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADIES' PETS.

My greenfinch, mole, and magpie—Grumbo and Venus—Smoker and the stag—Brutus—Lady Malmsbury's bullfinch—Lady Shelley—My tame cormorant—Her singular affection for me—Her battles with the gazelle—Doe and pony—Lord Stuart de Rothsay — Lady Hopetoun's fawn — Miss Grace Okeden's guinea-pig—Lady Emily Capel's hedgehogs—Canine pets, big and little—Eccentric tastes—The aviary—Marine and fresh water aquariums—Lady Castlereagh's pets—Bribery in the Foreign-office—Folly of petting dwarfs.

An intense love of natural history commenced with me at a very early age, but my field of action was confined to experiments with robins, finches, a field mouse, a shrew mouse, and a mole.

With robins in a cage I did not succeed; they were tamed at large better than in confinement. I refer to adult birds taken in brick traps; but my first success was attained with a greenfinch.

Well do I remember the renowned Dr. Jenner standing in the outer court of Berkeley Castle, watching with intense interest the proceedings of myself and my little bird, bird and boy apparently similarly happy. The cage having been set on the ground, and the bird taken out in my hand, the door being left

open, the finch was carried to the extreme end of the grass plat and then set at large, when he would leisurely hop back to his prison, and render himself up to voluntary confinement. The feathers on one wing were cut to prevent his flying away. Our visitor was a naturalist, as well as a kind-hearted man. He was pleased with the childish scene, and called my pet an "educated bird." Mice are easy enough to tame, and so are hedgehogs and rats; but my mole was a curious fellow, and I never could thoroughly determine how he became so tractable. Mutual satisfaction was developed when I held him by his very short tail for a walk, and to prevent his going to ground, and he picked up worms and ate them dropped by me purposely in his path.

As I grew taller my ambition rose to magpies, and I had two tame ones at large, but pinioned, on the lawn at Cranford, and most amusing, but mischievous birds they were. They were both males, and on one occasion one of them wandered into the game preserves, and lost his leg in a trap. In the pairing season his brother killed him, then took to his bosom a wild hen, and assisted her to make a nest in a yew tree. Of course, my brothers doomed the hen to death, and my poor bird invariably declared her presence in the nest when she was laying, by his intense agitation if any one approached the tree. He was always in the tree while she was there, his anxiety causing him to flutter his wings and to keep whistling as well as saying, though very incoherently,

every word he knew. It was this agitation that proclaimed her sitting on her eggs, when she was driven off and shot.

My first dog, as has been previously narrated in "My Reminiscences of a Huntsman," was the bull and mastiff "Grumbo," and a most wonderfully sagacious animal he was. He seized and caught thieves and poachers, battled with, and pinned by the nose oxen and cows in mimic bull-fights, held pigs by the ear, slew cats and rats, had pretended otter hunts after water-rats, which he always swallowed when killed, and dived after and saved bricks from the canal if told that "they were drowning," and for that act was always called "a member of the Humane Society." He had an excellent nose, though a short one, was a very good retriever for game when working with or for me; but on one occasion, when one of my brothers shot a pheasant which fell in the old moat, in the Moat House Wood, instead of bringing it out of the water to my brother, he took it to an island, where he laid down with it and picked it at his leisure, blowing the feathers from his nostrils up into the air, and eyeing my brother askance, as if in much satisfaction at his anger. Grumbo could be left all night in a plot of potatoes, to be there at daylight ready to keep the pheasants from scratching them up, and in short he could be left in charge of anything, from a waggon-load of live red deer, which conveyance had broken down, as he was on one occasion, down to a pair of gloves. If thus employed for any length of

time, he fully relied on my bringing him his dinner in a brown-paper bag.

Dogs of all kinds and sizes have been my pets, from a little black tan terrier called "Venus," so small that she could crawl down a rabbit's stop to get to the young in the nest, up to my most magnificent deer dog and retriever, Smoker, who was the handsomest, as well as one of the largest dogs I ever saw, being able, when I was over six feet high, with ease, to put his fore paws on my shoulders. He was white, with a coat like short silk, a spot on his back about the size of a dessert plate, and one on his head, of a deep brindle or mahogany colour. Anecdotes of the sporting qualities, the sagacity, and affection of this splendid dog have already been told in former works, but I will give here an unpublished incident in his early life which has been recently narrated to me by my good friend Mr. R. Bright, of Baker Street, Orsett, in Essex, and which deserves notice.

At this time Smoker was a puppy only ten months old, and then the property of Mr. Bailey, of Britwell, near Burnham, in Middlesex, from whom I purchased him. Mr. Bailey had also in his possession a tame male red deer, or stag, which I believe he originally received as a fawn from the Royal Park at Windsor.

Tame stags, and even tame bucks, are never safe when they grow to maturity, even if their antlers are kept sawn off, as they are able still to use their heads, and particularly their fore as well as their hind feet

in assaults on the human race. On this occasion, Mr. Bright was walking out, accompanied by the beautiful puppy, and happened to come to the spot where the stag was dangerously running at Lady Young, at that time living in the vicinity.

At my friend's bidding, Smoker, mere puppy though he was, instantly seized the stag by the flank, and while he kept his larger and more powerful antagonist at bay, Mr. Bright assisted Lady Young to escape from the scene of danger. Ever after this event, the stag went by the name of "Smoker's Deer."

In later years, and up to this time, I have pets about me that I am very fond of, to which I have referred in another place—among these my sagacious friend and constant companion, the Newfoundland dog, Brutus, who accompanied me in my travels and sports in the "far-west;" who has swum in the Mississippi and the Missouri, and their back waters or lagoons; bayed an Indian savage, and torn a star-spangled vest from a northern Volunteer General.

Among the pretty pets that I have seen under the graceful care of my lady friends are small birds of every kind, including the lovely goldfinch, spoken of in the preceding volumes, whose history and death were so mysterious. Of these, save in the instance of that one goldfinch, the bullfinch is capable, not only of the greatest attachment, but has ways of displaying his dislike to strangers infinitely beyond the power of

other birds; he is gifted, too, with extraordinary powers of song.

Lady Malmsbury has one at this moment—not a foreign bird—but one taken from and reared in the gardens at Heron Court, who, to other accomplishments, adds the perfect song, tone, and brilliancy of the nightingale. This he acquired by "self-help," his cage being within hearing of the foreign visitor.

Lady Shelley, at Boscombe, also has a bullfinch very much attached to her; and indeed of small birds, I have observed that the bullfinch is the most loveable. I once had a goldfinch very fond of me, and a dear little dove—one of the fawn-coloured ones—that while I was writing used to sit close to my hand and murmur to me for hours. My cormorant, too, was a perfect specimen of strange attachment, amusingly uncouth in all its manifestations. The dear bird loved no one else; though reared at Bacon Lodge, the blue ocean immediately at the foot of the lawn, and the cliffs of the Isle of Wight, where she was taken from the nest, full in view, with wing uncut, she never wished to go away; she not only knew my voice, but could distinguish the sound of my step from that of any other person, and, distinguishing it, would call to me from a stone among the laurels on which she used to sit—this being necessary on account of the formation of her expanded web feet.

She had an amazing appetite, and an extraordinary discriminating palate. Twice a day for breakfast, and

supper, fish or meats of the common kind sufficed her; but if she had venison for breakfast, and thus found that a deer was in the larder, she never failed to come again in the middle of the day, as well as for her supper. She preferred this diet to anything else. When spring came, she always had an idea that she was paired with me; other cormorants might fly by, but she heeded them not. Her entire affections were fixed on me, producing occasionally scenes at which I have seen my lady guests laugh till they were tired.

When I went out of the drawing-room window upon the lawn, and sat down, if the bird was not in sight, or out of hearing of my step upon the grass, I used to call out "Jack." She was a slow walker, but time being given, with a very quaint hop or jump, she was sure to emerge from the bushes; and by a succession of jumps, making an extraordinary noise through a considerably-expanded throat, she arrived at my side, when she laid her breast on the ground and her head upon my knee, and looked up at my face with her bright sea-green eyes full of love and veneration. After I had caressed her some little time she would go back into the bushes and bring out sticks, and tuck them under me, evidently under the idea that we ought to have a nest; and from this I apprehend that the male cormorant, like the male swan and moor hen, takes his turn at sitting. If I got up and went away she would then tuck the sticks under herself; and

one day, on my leaving a basket of bantam's eggs on the lawn, she took them all out without injuring one, and on my return was sitting on them. She was very fond of my "dear gazelle," which I, too, was immensely attached to. It had come home, after the siege and capture of Acre, in *The Thunderer;* and the graceful little deer and the uncouth bird on the lawn, used to have the most amusing mimic combats imaginable. The gazelle butted with her horns, and the cormorant pecked with her powerful bill, till both had become aware of the natural weapons. If, in their mimic warfare, the cormorant could peck Zellie on her delicate nose, she was victorious; but if she failed to do this, if the horn touched her with any force, the gazelle won the day.

Poor dear Jack! I had been very busy for two or three days, and had entrusted her to the care of a boy, having taught him how to cut her food. The young rascal would not give himself the trouble to attend to this, and flung to the greedy bird coarse pieces of horseflesh from the kennel. In passing from my house one day, Jack called to my well-known step, as usual, but in a voice so weak and strange that I went to the accustomed stone. She had fallen from it, perhaps, with that certainly her last call, and I took her in my arms, and sat down with her in my lap, in the sun on the lawn. All power of motion was gone—she could not stand; but never shall I forget the look of intense affection

that she gave me—perfectly in her senses as she was—when I smoothed her brown-coloured feathers, and talked to her as usual. She seemed to revive a little in the sun; but then, when I thought that there was a little change for the better, she suddenly raised her head, gazed in my face with brighter and more expressive sea-green eyes, leaned over, and then slowly lowering her taper neck, and resting it on my lap, the eyes gently closed, and my poor dear bird was dead.

I had also a beautiful doe fawn from the New Forest, who grew into a lovely doe, and used to play in the most graceful way around Beacon Lodge; but on finding out an old Icelandic pony of my lamented friend, the late Lord Stuart de Rothesay, his Lordship being, to my mind, the most agreeable companion I ever met, my graceful doe used to go down to the pony, who was turned out on a farm at Highcliff, for company, and the old pony and the young doe became great friends.

It was after the death of my noble friend, while Lady Stuart de Rothesay was in possession, I no longer had the shooting of the farm, which had been assigned, most injudiciously, to the farmer. This privilege is sure to bring ill will to the farmer among his neighbours; for having the right to the game, he is very apt, not only to preserve rabbits, but, in addition to shooting, he is certain to trap all he can, and, having no gamekeeper, his lands become the resort of every rascal in the country.

One afternoon, a labourer in the employ of this farmer—the latter I was told was a broken down tallow-chandler—came to me to say that his master was out after the doe for the purpose of killing her, and that I had better keep her at home. For this, then, there was no other remedy than to confine the doe, which I did, and eventually gave her away to a lady who applied for her, but whom I did not know.

The present Lady Hopetoun had also a fawn from the New Forest, which I obtained for her, and this dear, graceful thing used to follow her about like a dog. It came to a sad end, through and by the ferocity, too, of a pointer I had given to her father, and which with other pointers had very ill-advisedly been put into a sort of court wherein the doe slept every night, a very high paling having been run up between them.

In summer, when this fine young dog was short of work, I think he was the most superb pointer I ever saw; as he could see the doe, of course his youthful spirit inclined him to mischief. One day Lady Hopetoun, from her room window, heard the most fearful cries, which, something assured her, could only come from her tame doe. Running down at once, excited by the most dreadful apprehensions, she entered the court just in time to see her pet in the agonies of death, and the pointer seated on her body.

But of all the pretty, fat, frisky, sensible little pets I ever saw, is one at present enjoying the sunshine of its young mistress's favour, Miss Grace Okeden, in

the shape of a guinea-pig of the smaller kind. It knows her perfectly, will come from the top of the house to the bottom when she calls it, and to her call never fails to answer in its own peculiar, pretty little voice. It is fond of being caressed, and seems singularly self-possessed and sensible.

A most amusing scene occurred when a tame rabbit was brought into the presence of the guinea-pig by Master Okeden, and caressed in that room where "Piggie" had hitherto been the sole object of attention. Very striking were his demonstrations of jealousy. In truth, so sullen did the offended little creature become, that he retired beneath the sofa, and would neither answer the call of his young mistress nor come forth at her bidding, while the rabbit was in the room. He even refused his tea, which he was very fond of, nor did he thoroughly recover his amiability of temper for some days.

My sister, the Lady Emily Capel, had two hedgehogs perfectly tame, that used to run about the house, and of which she was very fond; so fond, that by way of an indulgence to their sleepy habits, she put them one morning up into a most comfortable easy arm-chair, on the sofa cushion, on which they immediately fell asleep. Major Capel had been out early that morning at a field-day, when coming home for his breakfast, hungry and tired, he cast off his sword and sabretache, and flung himself at once upon, not "into" his arm-chair, right upon the rolled-up backs of two old hedgehogs; of course, from the arm-chair

he sought the air with a spring of astonishment that nearly brought his head against the ceiling. I believe he requested that, for the future, the hedgehogs might have a bed exclusively their own.

Young ladies soon get over the age of white mice or lop-eared rabbit predilection, which they transmit to little brothers, or summarily dispose of should there be no such inheritor of cast-off playthings in the family. Petting kittens and puppies survives a few years longer, till the gratification will only be satisfied with the adult animal, and then immense is the affection bestowed on the canine pet—no matter of what sort or size, ranging between the tiniest of toy terriers to the most majestic of Alpine mastiffs or Newfoundlands. The rage for large dogs invariably characterizes the heroines of fashionable novels, who could never be permitted to be seen unaccompanied by "Lion" or "Nero." Now, however, the animal must be dwarfed like a Chinese plant, and Augusta or Clara cares only for a Tiny or Floss, the doubtful English terrier, Isle of Skye, or Maltese that must be led by a ribbon to prevent him from ignominiously coming to grief down a coal shoot or a drain.

The young, however, of most domesticated or semi-wild animals, have ever been favourites of the fair, particularly lambs, kids, and fawns; foals, too, and even calves, have been regarded with considerable affection, and now and then an eccentric taste could only be satisfied with a sucking-pig. Indeed, eccen-

tricity displays itself sometimes on objects much less attractive. I have known a large garden-toad, and a prickly hedgehog, equally untouchable by delicate fingers, receive more attention than a lively leveret, or the most quiet of land tortoises.

The aviary generally comes into favour as a domestic institution, but not until after some little experience with individual birds—water-lifting goldfinch, piping bullfinch, tuneful canary, or soft-toned linnet, or in pairs, such as turtle-doves, love-birds, Java sparrows, and the like. It is generally an elderly lady who takes to petting parrots, macaws, and cockatoos; and noisy nuisances though they are, the worst is to be preferred to a nasty monkey, or a yelping pug-dog such as used to be found in the sitting-rooms of dowagers in my youth.

Young ladies will readily pet almost anything that has life—silk-worms, gold fish, bantam fowls, squirrels, dormice, &c. &c.—but I never heard of their taking very kindly to black beetles, or of their cultivating very close relations either with a spider or a wasp. Of late years their fondness for objects of natural history has taken a wider field. The aquarium has led to habits of intimacy with creatures they had never previously seen or heard of. For instance, the little reservoir of sea-water enables them to become familiar with those interesting zoophytes that form so curious a link between the animal and vegetable worlds. The sea anemones seen through the glass have the appearance of a con-

servatory of rare exotics, and the interest is much increased when the periwinkle and the hermit-crab are domesticated with them. The pond water is equally worthy of study, when sufficiently peopled with water beetles, lizards, newts, and a few other creatures of strange habits and appearance. The beetles dash down and about with the most extraordinary activity, and the miniature crocodiles, while crawling over the bits of stone and weed at the bottom, illustrate with singular fidelity Mrs. Malaprop's famous "Allegory on the banks of the Nile."

These evidences of the increasing love of natural history among my fair friends I have no doubt contribute more to their education than all "Mangnall's Questions," and the usual school compendiums of the "ologies;" but though I could name many ladies who make a study as well as a source of entertainment of the aquarium and the aviary, I have known others who have taken to pets in this department of knowledge in a far more enterprising manner.

There was Lady Castlereagh, the lady of the celebrated Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who kept at Cray Farm, in Kent, a regular menagerie in iron cages. How it originated I have forgotten. It seems a strange taste for a lady patroness at Almacks, and one of the most distinguished leaders of the beau monde, to attempt to rival Exeter Change in a small country residence somewhere about a dozen miles from town; nevertheless at the gay fêtes given

by her during the season to her innumerable fashionable friends, no part of the entertainment was more popular than the exhibition of Lady Castlereagh's pets. It is just possible that some of the more ambitious subordinates at the Foreign Office, stationed in India, Africa, or other parts of the world, where wild animals were accessible, tried to recommend themselves to their chief by turning bear leader or lion's provider to his lady. Thus rising diplomatists may have got into favour as the menagerie increased in extent. A tiger perhaps helped one to an embassy, and an armadillo made another at least a Secretary of Legation.

What became of this zoological collection after the sad event that broke up the establishment at North Cray Farm, I never heard. They were sold probably to Mr. Cross, who started, many years later, the Surrey Gardens—the one in the Regent's Park was not then in existence—or perhaps became a portion of one of the travelling collections of wild beasts that were then the chief attraction of our annual fairs. Be this as it may, Lady Castlereagh's example, to the best of my knowledge, has never been followed by the ladies of other Foreign Secretaries. Whatever may be their taste for natural history, they have been satisfied with a modest demonstration in the shape of fernery, aquarium, aviary, and—toy dog-house.

I cannot, however, close this chapter without a few words on another form of petting which ladies

have adopted, or rather re-introduced within the last few years. I allude to their patronage of dwarfs, and the eagerness with which they crowded to an exhibition of this nature that has long been one of the sights of London, and indeed of the principal provincial towns. I can understand the feeling which led them to pet the juvenile hippopotamus on his first arrival in England; there was something quite novel, and there was a real interest in beholding such a spectacle as the lively young monster presented when taking his bath. But to look on an abortive effort of nature, burlesquing humanity with the regularity of an automaton—a creature whose regular height, size, and strength have been artificially contracted to those of an infant—what there is worthy of a sensible person's observation in this littleness I cannot imagine. It is natural that children should find amusement in exhibitions of Tom Thumbs and Commodore Nutts and Minnie Warrens, and the rest of the small fry, as they formerly found it in "Industrious Fleas," because it is a childish affair without anything in it that can appeal to a mature intellect; but what should take matrons and grown-up young women to throng to such a sight, I never was able to discover.

It is quite true that dwarfs have been ladies' pets from time immemorial, but not in an age of enlightenment, affording in every direction objects of profitable contemplation. The lady of the middle ages had some excuse for amusing herself with her toy

man or her toy monkey; but the lady of the nineteenth century has nothing of this sort. Her little-mindedness is a tacit acknowledgment that she cannot appreciate what is exalted, or great, or noble in the world around her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUE STORY OF L. E. L.

Attacks on me—Mr. Carter Hall—Mystification about L. E. L., and the scandals respecting her—Her position with Dr. Maginn—Her letter to a lover to whom she was engaged—Accepts the Governor of Cape Coast Castle—His conduct—The wedding breakfast—The voyage to Africa—Mrs. Macleau's sudden death—Excitement produced in England by erroneous statements—Dr. Madden's inquiry—Animosity of critics—Carter Hall's bombast—His accusation of her general untruthfulness—Relations of editors with female writers—Lockhart's burlesque ode on Dr. Maginn—Anonymous cowardice.

In my former volumes, while relating my quarrel with Dr. Maginn, I was forced into mentioning the unfortunate cause of it. I did so, however, with as much reserve as was possible, suppressing her name so carefully that the general reader could not from that narrative have discovered who was therein referred to. Since their publication, some of my critics, under no necessity whatever of disturbing this well-intended reservation, have declared Miss Landon to be the person to whom I have alluded, and not contenting themselves with a denial of my statements, have abused me for having made them without their having the slightest foundation in fact.

One of these, the editor of the "Art Journal," in the April number of that periodical, 1865, has ventured

far beyond the limits of criticism in his remarks—betraying his own ignorance and self-conceit in a manner that would be thought astounding in any other public writer. This is the gentleman who sometimes seeks to entertain an audience by relating what he thinks of his most celebrated contemporaries—it would entertain them still more could they hear what his distinguished contemporaries think of him—beginning with that masterly portrait of a great artist, the immortal "Mr. Pecksniff."

There was nothing new in my declaration of the relations that existed between Dr. Maginn and his hapless victim. They were a matter, to a certain extent, of public notoriety, and had been referred to again and again in biographical notices. Mr. Laman Blanchard, who was too inexperienced a biographer to be entrusted with the task he undertook, hints vaguely at the fact; Mrs. Thomson, in her "Recollections of Literary Characters," indulges in a similar mystification about L. E. L., contenting herself with the acknowledgment that "she made one false step;" Dr. Madden, in his "Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington," is characteristically diffuse on "the designs of malevolent people" preventing her union with two persons who had made honourable proposals.

This mystification has been kept up in other publications, but that the truth was known, in literary circles at least, I have not the slightest doubt. That I have confined myself to that portion of it connected with my own history may be proved by a

letter from Lady Blessington, dated January 29th, 1839,* in which *two editors*, both married men, are named as her paramours by public report.

Notwithstanding the representations of more than one of her female literary friends, I am quite certain that Miss Landon placed no confidence in them. That she endeavoured to convince them of her innocence of wrong-doing, is natural enough. That she did not succeed with all who knew her, is equally true. Her warmest friend, writing of Dr. Maginn's improper intimacy with her, says, "Some of those who disbelieved the other scandal affected to give credit to this, and stung the sensitive mind of poor L. E. L. almost to madness by their hypocritical conduct!"†

It is incredible that "the calumny and hatred of the envious" should pursue an unoffending woman in this way. Such general terms ought to deceive no one—the poor creature had placed herself in the power of a hoary reprobate; and when he feared that his prey would escape him—not on account of any love for her, but for her money—he had recourse to the anonymous letters and other circulated slanders, which rendered her life a burden to her.

Then it was that she looked out for some one able and willing to protect her. I was known for some skill in manly accomplishments to more than one of her intimate friends, besides being possessed of physical strength that would render a personal contest a thing to be avoided by her persecutors, were they many or few. She saw no other way of escape

* Madden's "Blessington," vol. ii. p. 295. † Ibid. p. 296.

than by calling in such assistance as she knew that I could and would give.

In reply to the insinuation that a girl was not likely to place such confidence in a stranger, it is only necessary to state that she was but two years my junior, and besides being a mature woman of the world, was in a desperate plight, that demanded an unusual remedy.

I am sorry to be obliged to add that my interposition only put a stop to personal visits—the anonymous letters and the whispered slanders were circulated with more briskness than ever, but with such good caution that they could not be traced to their source.

Another of her biographers says: "Numerous suitors made matrimonial overtures to L. E. L., but the cautions of her friends, who had information 'from the best sources,' made them either draw back, or exhibit a prudential curiosity that caused her indignantly to repulse them. One high-minded man implored her to marry him, but rumours had already coupled her name dishonourably with his, [this seems a third scandal,] and with noble generosity, though *she loved him*, she refused to become his wife with such a blot on her fame." She wrote to him—

"Again, I repeat, that I will not allow you to consider yourself bound to me by any possible tie. To any friend, to whom you may have stated *our engagement*, I cannot object to your stating the truth. Do every justice to your own kind and generous conduct. *I am placed in a most cruel and difficult position.* Give me the satisfaction of, as far as rests with myself,

having nothing to reproach myself with; the more I think the more I feel. I ought not, I cannot allow you to unite yourself with one accused of—I cannot write it; the mere suspicion is dreadful as death."*

This argument must have been equally strong as affecting any suitor; nevertheless, she suffered herself to be sought in marriage by a person of whom she knew very little beyond his holding an appointment as Governor of Cape Coast Castle.

She soon had reason to repent her decision to accept him; Mr. Maclean, by his conduct, made it clearly apparent that the accusations against her fair fame had reached him. He absented himself, became sullen or callous; in short, strove to induce his affianced to terminate their engagement. Miss Landon, however, had made up her mind not to throw away another chance, enticed him back, and he, finding no honourable way of evading his obligations, most reluctantly gave directions for the wedding.

Mr. Samuel Carter Hall, in the article I have referred to in the "Art Journal," has published a description of the bridegroom's behaviour on that memorable occasion; but Lady Blessington's letter, already quoted, states his disinclination to the union more distinctly. Mr. Bulwer, since Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart., the most earnest and trustworthy of her male friends, had previously remonstrated with her on Mr. Maclean's conduct, and her brother, a clergyman, had written to him to demand

* Jeaffreson's "Novels and Novelists," vol. ii. pp. 189-90.

an explanation. Finding that he had gone too far to retract, the Governor had accepted his position, but in the most ungracious manner that can be conceived. "From the moment of his return from Scotland," says her friend, Lady Blessington, "to that of their departure, he was moody, mysterious, and ill-humoured—continually sneering at literary ladies—speaking slightingly of her works—and, in short, showing every symptom of a desire to disgust her."

But she had too much at stake to do what any woman of spirit under such provocation would otherwise have done. She was frantically intent on getting beyond the influence of the hoary ruffian, or ruffians, who had blasted her fair fame; she was also aware that at her age, thirty-six, her chance of such an opportunity of escape from the terrible life she had been forced to lead, was remote indeed.

"Her pride," writes Lady Blessington, "shrunk from the notion of again having it said that another marriage was broken off; and she determined not to break with him. Mystery on mystery followed; no friend or relative of his, though an uncle and aunt were in London, sanctioned the marriage; nay, more, it is now known that two days previous to it, he, on being questioned by his uncle, denied positively the fact of his intention to be married."*

The ceremony was permitted by him to take place on the 7th of June, 1838, with what feelings on the

* Madden's "Blessington," vol. ii. p. 297.

part of the reluctant bridegroom it is easy to imagine. Mr. Bulwer gave away the bride; and after the irrevocable knot had been tied, the party returned to the wedding breakfast. Here the cup of bitterness, already sufficiently full for "the happy man," was presented to his lips brimming over, by an awkward attempt at oratory on the part of one of the company. To be obliged to listen to a string of platitudes from Mr. Carter Hall, respecting the virtues of a woman he had been forced to marry, when his mind had been filled with the gravest accusations against her, proved too much for human endurance, and the officious orator got considerably snubbed.

To any other woman in comparatively good circumstances, a home on the pestilential coast of Africa would have been sufficiently repulsive; but to Mrs. Maclean, if not an Arcadia, it held out a prospect of security and rest. In case of disappointment, the new-made wife secretly provided herself with a sure and speedy remedy—and then, accompanied by her husband, sailed to her destination.

His dissatisfaction with his choice is reported to have been made more evident during the voyage out; indeed, apparently, never was there so disagreeable a honeymoon as that of this ill-assorted couple. Intelligence reached England of Mrs. Maclean's safe arrival at Cape Coast Castle, and almost immediately afterwards of her sudden and mysterious death—she had been found dead in her room, prostrate on the floor, with a bottle in her hand labelled prussic acid. This was on the 15th of October. A coroner's in-

quest was immediately held—a verdict pronounced exonerating everyone—and a few hours later she was buried.

The wildest rumours were immediately set afloat by the hapless lady's female friends in England—each pretending to have been in her confidence, and each affecting to know the facts of the case better than anybody else. One averred that a cup of coffee had been given her by a black boy, which had been drugged by a native woman who had lived with the Governor as his mistress; others denied that she had ever employed hydrocyanic acid, or taken any poison with her; and the rest accused Mr. Maclean of cruelty and adultery, and even of being accessory to the murder of his wife.

Dr. Madden visited Cape Coast a few months after the fearful tragedy, and made a careful and rigid inquiry into the circumstances attending it. He discovered that the cup of coffee was a myth; that the native woman referred to had been sent to a considerable distance from the castle before Mrs. Maclean's arrival, and had never entered it since; and that Dr. Cobbold, who had immediately been summoned to the deceased, had no doubt that Mrs. Maclean had died of a large dose of prussic acid administered by herself.*

It is impossible to come to any other conclusion, after perusing Dr. Madden's statements, than that the unhappy victim had found her position intolerable, and that what she had endured, combined with what

* Madden's "Blessington," vol. ii. p. 277.

she was enduring, had, in a moment of desperation, tempted her to make use of her last resource. She emptied the bottle, and drank off the contents. Then, apparently from physical pain or other sudden impulse, hastened to call assistance, and dropped down dead as she reached the door.

Thus this gifted creature sought to realize ideas expressed in her last poetical composition, published in an annual two months after her death:—

> "Then were that solemn quiet given,
> That life's harsh feverish dreams deny;
> Then might the last prayer rise to Heaven,
> *My God! I prithee let me die.*"*

But why was death so earnestly desired and sought? Because her life had been rendered intolerably miserable by the cowardly machinations of one of the greatest scoundrels on the face of the earth. The editor of the "Art Journal," in his Pecksniffian attack on me, and defence of Mrs. Maclean, makes two admissions, which ought to satisfy every impartial reader of the truth of the statements I have made.

In the first place, he acknowledges the rascality of Dr. Maginn. This is important to me, because this man's boon companionship with his associates on the Press, and cleverness as a journalist, have induced many who perhaps knew nothing of his vices, to treat his memory with a good deal more consideration than it deserved. Another motive for their leniency

* "Flowers of Loveliness" for 1839.

exists in their *esprit de corps*, which prevents their acknowledging so black a sheep to be one of their flock.

Were it worth my while, I could prove that this is far from being a solitary case; that the most cowardly anonymous attacks upon individuals who have given no real cause of offence, excited by the meanest jealousy or a groundless prejudice, have been made by persons assuming the office of critics, with no higher pretension for it than what might be claimed by indifferent bookmakers; and that though neither Bulwer nor Macaulay was sufficiently elevated to be beyond the reach of their malice, they delight in expending it on some struggling *littérateur* whom they know to be unable to assail them in return.

In any other profession, this mode of destroying the prospects of a rival would meet with general reprobation; among *men*, the striking another when he is unable to return the blow, would be pronounced a dastardly act. But some journalists have obtained an infamous notoriety by conduct of this kind. In short, the age terribly wants the services of another Pope, Gifford, or Byron, by a wholesale flagellation of the principal offenders, to put an end to anonymous and cowardly abuse.

Mr. Hall writes this amusing specimen of contradiction:—"We were among the few friends who *knew her intimately*, but it was not in her nature to open her heart to any. Her large organ of 'secretiveness' was her bane. She knew it, and deplored it. It was the origin of that misconception which embittered

her whole life—the mainspring of that calumny which made fame a mockery and glory a deceit."

If anything is to be made of this balderdash, it means that she held her tongue when he fancies she ought to have spoken out to him. But Miss Landon may have thought, as others of her sex have done under similar circumstances, that when an injury has been suffered, the least said about it the soonest mended.

He adds—"But *I* may say that when slander was busiest with her reputation, *we* had the best means to confute it, and did." What a pity it is he does not state *when*, *where*, and *how* this was accomplished! A satisfactory explanation of an ambiguous passage in her life would serve her even on the other side of the grave. But her self-constituted counsel, who, it is quite clear, was not trusted by her at all, makes an empty profession, and oracularly pronounces the matter settled.

Presently, he continues—"Yet this *blight in her spring-time* undoubtedly led to the fatal marriage that resulted in her mournful and mysterious death." What blight? Her large organ of secretiveness, as we were assured, was the mainspring of the mischief. But what was the mischief? As the blight is dated in the spring of her existence, it must have occurred in her girlhood. Suppose we say sixteen to eighteen, this gives the years 1818 to 1820. In the next page the writer acknowledges that he did not become acquainted with her till the year 1825, when she was

a woman of twenty-three, and her first volume had been published *three years before.*

It is plain here, that if "any blight had affected her spring-time," Mr. Carter Hall could have had no personal knowledge of it. His assertion, then, that he had "the best means of refuting a slander when it was busiest with her reputation," and "did," is all Pecksniff.

As Dr. Maginn did not leave Cork for England till the year 1822, it is just possible that somebody else was the source of this blight in her spring-time.

Was it the other editor, alluded to in Lady Blessington's letter as one of the hapless girl's betrayers? Supposing this to be the case, it does not in the slightest degree affect the veracity of my statements. Dr. Maginn is charged only with his own rascality, and I had it from the lips of his outraged and unhappy victim.

Mr. Carter Hall's attempts at explanation add further confusion to the miserable tale. He writes—"The calumny was of the kind that most deeply wounds a woman. How it originated, it was, at the time, and is, of course now, *impossible to say.*" A few lines back the writer boasted that he knew everything, and had confuted everything. A few lines further on, he avers "the utter impossibility of its being other than false could have been proved not only by us, but by a dozen of her intimate friends, whose evidence would have been without question and conclusive."

Considering that the writer has avowed that Miss

Landon placed no confidence in any one, and that it was impossible to trace the origin of the evil under which she suffered, it is a little too absurd to refer to such "conclusive evidence." Besides this, her clumsy would-be friend adds—"Certainly *no advocate of Miss Landon can affirm that the bright ornament of truth was hers!* It was no use telling her this; she would argue that a conversation of facts would be as dull as a work on algebra, and that all she did was to put her poetry into practice."

I never found her thus entirely untrustworthy. If Mr. Carter Hall did, her statements to him must be worthless.

The acknowledgment made by Mr. Carter Hall, that Miss Landon was *extremely imprudent* in her relations with Dr. Maginn, is equally in opposition to his view of the case. He admits that she wrote a letter or letters to the Doctor that excited the jealousy of his wife; but it ought to be remembered that at this period of her life she was not a simple-minded girl unacquainted with the usages of society; she was a mature woman, some thirty years of age at least, and perfectly well informed as to her responsibility in such a correspondence.

The fact is, her embarrassment had made such letters imperative. She knew herself to be in the toils of her destroyer, and for a time dared not struggle. The tender expressions that excited the jealousy of Mrs. Maginn were matters of course—equally as a matter of course, she made to her friends the best explanation of the occurrence it was in her

power to produce. The indisputable fact that she rejected one or more advantageous offers of marriage that would leave her open to the persecutions of her enemy, and finally accepted another she could not have listened to under happier circumstances, that apparently would move her far from his sphere of influence, is all the confirmation I required.

Lady Blessington has put it on record that two editors, both elderly men, enjoyed the credit or discredit of having been Miss Landon's seducers. They were both men of profligate habits, though married, and while expressing her conviction of her friend's innocence, she does not hazard a remark that such acts were then in the slightest degree at variance with editorial privileges. I shall be glad to know if nothing of the kind has occurred before or since, and if the necessities of female authors, and their natural desire for success, have never been taken advantage of by men in a position to forward their views.

The tone employed by respectable critics in dealing with an offending brother of the guild, may be seen in the burlesque epitaph on Miss Landon's murderer, written by the then editor of the "Quarterly Review:"—

"Here, early to bed, lies kind William Maginn,
Who with genius, wit, learning—Life's trophies to win,
Had neither great lord, nor rich cit of his kin,
Nor discretion to set himself up as to tin.
No, his portion soon spent—like the poor heir of Lynn,
He turned author, ere yet there was beard on his chin;
And whoever was out, and whoever was in,
For your Tories his fine Irish brains he would spin;

Who received prose and rhyme with a promising grin—
'Go ahead, you queer fish, and more power to your fin!'
But to save from starvation stirred never a pin.
Light for long was his heart, though his breeches were thin,
And his acting for certain was equal to Quin;
But at last he was beat, and sought help of the bin
(All the same to the Doctor from claret to gin),
Which led swiftly to jail and consumption therein.
It was much when the bones rattled loose in the skin,
He got leave to die here, out of Babylon's din.
Barring drink and the girls, I ne'er heard a sin:
Many worse, better few, than bright broken Maginn."

Worn out by his excesses, the subject of these lines by his brother editor died at Walton-on-Thames, where he was buried. "Barring drink and the girls" is merely euphuistic for the habitual drunkenness and debauchery that brought his existence to a close several years after the death of his victim.

Mr. Lockhart must have had the worst possible opinion of his fraternity when he penned the last line of the foregoing "epitaph." He declares that there were many worse and few better than this man. God help the poor authoresses who are doomed to come within the sphere of their influence! No wonder that some of them have become notorious for "extreme imprudence."

The worst feature in this melancholy case is the general apathy of the journalists to the shameful abuse of power it demonstrates. Instead of properly condemning a bad system, they foolishly attempt to throw discredit on my exposure of it. The powerful approval of the general public, evinced by the extraordinary patronage they have given to my work, has made me, however, ample amends for such pitiful annoyances;

and the spirit in which the present volumes are written, I hope, will satisfy my friends that I am not to be deterred from the performance of a duty by even much more formidable attacks.

An anonymous assailant is a coward, and a coward is the next most despicable thing on earth to the scoundrel who, failing in all personal attraction, employs an influential position to the prejudice of a clever and aspiring woman!

CHAPTER X.

GORE HOUSE.

'Shiver the Frills"—Early life of Margaret Power in Tipperary—Her first marriage and early separation—Mrs. Farmer's equivocal life—Lord Mountjoy, afterwards Earl of Blessington—Captain Farmer's widow becomes a countess—Irish extravagance—Lady Blessington a *lionne*—Her first acquaintance with Comte D'Orsay—The Count accompanies her to Italy—Her imaginative accounts of herself—The Blessingtons abroad—Lady Blessington's depreciation of Lord Byron—His indifference to her charms—Lord Blessington's will, and marriage of his daughter to Comte D'Orsay—The Blessingtons at Paris—Death of Lord Blessington—His insolvency—Lady Blessington at Seamore Place and Gore House—Her "Conversations with Lord Byron," imaginary—Her admirers—Hoaxing one's friends—Waning splendour—D'Orsay's and Lady Blessington's debts—Her novels—They fly to Paris—Their deaths—Napoleon's supposed ingratitude.

THERE is a peculiar kind of romance in the early history of Lady Blessington to which justice has hitherto never been done. It could only have occurred in one part of the world—Ireland; indeed, I am inclined to think only in one particular portion of it—Tipperary. Margaret was one of the children of what is there styled "a squireen," known far and wide as Buck Power, *alias* "Shiver the Frills"—a fine gentleman, with small means in a rapid state of diminution, after a fashion familiar to Irish bucks in

general. I use the term not in any disparagement of Irish *gentlemen.*

His wife's father, also a buck, as Dr. Madden, her biographer, states, was "an ill-fated gentleman." In ordinary English, he was hanged, which misfortune also happened to a cousin—a Popish priest: one of these worthies for being concerned in a rebellion, the other in a murder. "Shiver the Frills" had a narrow escape from the same fate, he having deliberately shot and killed a peasant, for which crime he had to take his trial on a charge of murder, at Clonmel, on the 23rd of April, 1807.

The first had been reputed rebels and Whiteboys; but the latter had become a Protestant and a J. P. "Buck Sheehy" was executed *sans ceremonie* at Clogheen of the famous old song—

> "'Twas in the town of nate Clogheen,
> That Sergeant Snap met Paddy Carey."

The head of the priest was put upon a pike, after he had been hanged, drawn, and quartered, at Clonmel, where it remained, we are assured, for twenty years. But as to "Buck Power," he being a magistrate, justice, like charity, was expected to cover a multitude of sins, and did.

By this time he had not only dissipated his small patrimony but had entered into business as a corn-merchant and butter-buyer; he had also started a newspaper called "The Clonmel Gazette, or Munster Mercury;" but occupied what leisure he had in hunting down his rebellious countrymen, with the

assistance of a troop of dragoons. Their friends retaliated by setting fire to his premises; his stock was consumed. It was found that he had very far overdrawn his account, and was hopelessly insolvent. He obtained nothing from Government for his zeal in hunting suspected rebels, while the newspaper got him into a serious scrape in the way of actions for libels, and in the end proved a ruinous speculation.

Still, "Shiver the Frills" is represented as a fair specimen of the Irish country gentleman of his time —lived and dressed extravagantly, and brought up his family amid scenes not likely to be conducive to their morals—out of Tipperary. Margaret was born in the year 1789. What education she received does not appear; but at a very early age the young lady was permitted to share in all the gaieties of Clonmel. Her father's embarrassed circumstances led him into a scrape of rather an ugly complexion. He had been entrusted with an order upon the County Treasurer, when, having an execution in his house, he ventured another man's name on the back, got it cashed, and applied the proceeds to his own use. He was shortly after arrested on a charge of forgery; but the Buck had friends on the Grand Jury, and they threw out the bill.

In a memoir written by a member of Lady Blessington's family, and in a statement made by herself to Dr. Madden, her literary executor, it is averred that Margaret was forced by her father, when little more than *fourteen*, into a marriage with a man she detested

—Captain Maurice St. Leger Farmer, then of the 47th Regiment of Infantry. But according to an account subsequently published by the Captain's brother, it was a love-match, and Power *père* had promised to give the bride, who was in her *sixteenth* year, the sum of 1000*l.*, not a farthing of which, of course, was ever paid. They were married on the 7th of March, 1804; but the husband having nothing but his pay, and the wife nothing but her beauty, they soon became overwhelmed with debt, which necessitated the Captain to sell his commission. He then entered the service of the East India Company. As Mrs. Farmer refused to accompany him to India, he left 500*l.* in her hands for her support —sailed to join his regiment, and never beheld her again.

The young wife seems to have lived quite an independent life; but though this must have lasted for nine years, it was scarcely so much as ever referred to by herself, and has been rapidly glanced over by her biographer. A trial had occurred at Clonmel Assizes on the 4th of August, 1806—"Macarthy *v.* Watson,"—in which her sister Ellen and her parents figured prominently as witnesses. In the course of it there was so much cross-swearing that the Judge, in summing up, declared—"If the plaintiff's case could be established, the defendant must be a designing knave—a slanderer of his friend Colonel Bagwell, and intentionally a swindler of Mr. Macarthy. On the other hand, if it appeared that Macarthy and Power had conspired to defraud the

defendant, then perjury and fraud must be inevitably fastened alike on the plaintiff and Power."

The Tipperary jury were again so far favourable to the Buck, that they gave half the damages claimed as indemnity for a libel.

Mrs. Farmer's separation from her husband, and way of life, were not approved of by her more respectable relations; but her great personal attractions brought her influential friends, who more than made up for their loss. The Captain wrote, imploring her to come to him—she refused; he subsequently sailed for England, but she had then formed engagements which made a husband unnecessary. In the year 1816 Mrs. Farmer was living in affluence in Manchester Square, London, where an extravagant Irish nobleman, Lord Mountjoy, advanced to the earldom of Blessington in June of the same year, had tenanted a mansion since 1811, and where a natural daughter was born to him, by a married lady, whose husband conveniently died the following year. He was united to Major Browne's relict in 1812. Lady Mountjoy only enjoyed her dignity until September, 1814, and the widower appears to have lost no time in endeavouring to supply her place. He seems to have been partial to officers' wives, for his second favourite was Mrs. Farmer.

His Lordship's descent was curious even for an Irish peerage. The family originated with Luke Gardiner, whose first step in gentility was on the foot-board of a carriage. He subsequently acquired wealth and dignities by flunkeyism of another kind; but after he had become a member of the Privy

Council of Ireland, as well as Vice-Treasurer, and had married a heiress, an noble friend of his in Dublin, when they were getting into a carriage, enquired, "How comes it, Gardiner, you never make a mistake and get up behind?" To which he retorted, his friend's embarrassments being notorious—"Some people, my Lord, who have been long accustomed to going in, remain at last on the outside, and can neither get in nor up again." Luke's grandson, also a Privy Councillor, was created in 1795 Viscount Mountjoy, and was afterwards shot by his rebellious countrymen at the battle of Ross, in 1798, by which mischance his only son, the widow's friend, succeeded to the title and estates.

Poor Captain Farmer returned to England only to find his wife completely estranged from him. This so preyed upon his spirits that he took to drinking to drown dull care. In October, 1817, after a debauch with a brother officer and his friends, confined in the King's Bench Prison, they locked him in to prevent his going away, and in getting out of the window whilst helplessly drunk, the poor fellow fell and was killed. On the 16th of February, the following year, the handsome Widow Farmer succeeded to the good fortune of the handsome Widow Browne. She became the Countess of Blessington.

Lady Mountjoy had been mourned in a funeral that cost the desolate widower between three and four thousand pounds. He now displayed tenfold extravagance on her successor; so lavish became his expenditure that he threw into the shade all previous

examples of Irish improvidence. In truth, he took to the road to ruin at a pace which left all competitors far behind.

After his second marriage, Lord Blessington accompanied his lady to his Irish estates, where, however, she had been a visitor when Mrs. Farmer, a year or two before; but though the house had been fitted up with the most costly decorations, the spoilt beauty had no idea of burying her charms in the Mountjoy Forest. She returned to London after a few weeks, and blazed like a meteor upon the town in a magnificent mansion in St. James's Square.

Lady Blessington was now twenty-eight, and, as no limits were assigned to her expenditure, she soon contrived to set half the London world raving about her beauty, and the other half equally frantic about her magnificent establishment. The daughter of the ruined Tipperary buck had suddenly become a queen in English society. Royal Dukes, Cabinet Ministers, distinguished members of the Opposition, and celebrated wits, painters, poets, actors, and authors thronged to pay their homage to her gorgeous charms. She found no difficulty in passing for one of the most gifted of her sex; but how she acquired the accomplishments for which she received credit I never knew, and it would have been difficult for her to have explained.

Among the foreign noblemen who sought her acquaintance were the Comte de Grammont (afterwards Duc de Guiche) and his more celebrated relative, Comte Alfred D'Orsay. The latter had but recently

attained his majority. His father was known as Beau D'Orsay, being one of the finest men in the Court of the First Napoleon—and his mother, a very beautiful woman, was a natural daughter of the King of Wurtemberg. He inherited, therefore, extraordinary natural advantages, and these he had improved by education until he had become apparently a French Admirable Crichton.

At the time of his first visit to England, the young Count made a most favourable impression wherever he appeared; but nowhere did it prove so deep or so lasting as in the breast of his charming hostess of the magnificent *conversaziones*, *soirées*, dinners, balls, breakfasts and suppers, that followed each other in rapid succession in that brilliant mansion in St. James's Square, in which he was a favoured guest.

Count D'Orsay's stay was brief, and he returned with his family to Paris; Lady Blessington had somehow or other visited the French metropolis twice, when Mrs. Farmer. A very few months were suffered to elapse before she found herself there for the third time, under circumstances that greatly increased her means of gratification. She seems to have made a full use of her advantages, enjoying every pleasure placed within her reach by the liberality of her luxurious husband.

It is impossible to form an adequate idea of the sway she exercised over this extravagant man, but I may say that she prevailed upon him to commence a lengthened tour in Italy, in company with the handsome young Frenchman, and it was immediately so

arranged. Count D'Orsay joined the Blessingtons at Avignon—they having started from Paris on the 12th of February, 1823, for Italy, viâ Marseilles.

There was another member of the party, the present Charles Mathews, the comedian, who no doubt added much to their entertainment. Unfortunately he and Count D'Orsay quarrelled, when the language of the latter had been unjustifiable. A duel, I was told, would have been the result, had not judicious friends interfered, and induced the offender to apologize.

The manner in which Lady Blessington was in the habit of drawing upon her imagination, when detailing ordinary matters of fact, is amusingly illustrated in her diary of this visit to Paris. In describing a picture in a gallery, she wrote, "Poor Raphael makes us, though stern Protestants," &c. According to her own testimony, she never changed her faith, which was Roman Catholic. Elsewhere she refers to herself as "a native of dear, free, happy England." In the statements she was in the habit of making of her antecedents, the same characteristic prevails. They are quite as little reliable as the diary. The reader is necessitated, therefore, to take her authority generally *cum grano salis*—with a large grain too, sometimes. It has been these glaring deviations from fact that have made me doubt if she really was her own historian, or the bonâ-fide authoress of much that bore her name.

In these deviations she very much resembled her once celebrated countrywoman, Lady Morgan, whose lively

imagination was constantly pressed into service on similar occasions. Possibly they inherited the tendency from their sires—the rollicking actor, Owenson, being quite as careless respecting such vulgar commonplaces as facts, as was the equally reckless squireen, butter-factor, magistrate, and newspaper proprietor, Buck Power, *alias* "Shiver the Frills."

The mode of living of the Blessingtons abroad exceeded, where possible, their extravagance at home. His Lordship travelled with a retinue of cooks sufficient to satisfy the requirements of a regiment, headed by a *maître de cuisine* who had been employed by an emperor. His lady surrounded herself with every attainable manifestation of splendour. Count D'Orsay lived with them evidently "quite regardless of expense;" and Miss Mary Anne Power, a younger daughter of the ruined Tipperary buck, who was also of the party, flourished in a style totally unknown to her brightest dreams in Clonmel.

On the 1st of April, 1823, they met Lord Byron at Genoa. Lady Blessington could not wait for an invitation; but, with a demonstrative enterprise not unfamiliar to some Irish ladies, obtained access to his villa, situated at about a mile and a half from the city, by getting herself driven to it in an open carriage on a rainy afternoon, when her Lord and her Count, having gained admittance, apologized for hastening away, in consequence of the position of their fair companions. Lord Byron took the hint with the promptitude of an accomplished gallant, hurried into the court-yard without his hat, and

quickly returned escorting the so far triumphant Irish beauty.

They stayed long; the lady exerted herself to please, but was disappointed with the result. Lord Byron, in a letter written the next day, mentions the interview, but was most favourably impressed with Count D'Orsay. "Miladi seems highly literary," was the somewhat equivocal compliment he paid to her intellectual pretensions. His reference to her personal attractions was more satisfactory.

Lady Blessington, in her diary, expresses her disappointment at the interview, the noble poet in his manner towards her not having realized her poetic *beau idéal.* The fact is, that he suspected her intentions of making literary capital out of him, and became in consequence more jocular than was his wont. They subsequently met about half a dozen times, but that first impression, like many another, seems to have remained.

Lord Byron was then avowedly devoted to la bella Contessa Guiccioli, which possibly accounts for his insensibility to the Irish lady, whose beauty might, in comparison, be considered on the wane. Lady Blessington had now reached the mature age of thirty-four; and, though still charming, had no chance against her younger rival. The illustrious poet remained very friendly towards her and her companions, but seemed inclined to quiz her too obvious attempts to queen it in company.

He persuaded Lord Blessington to take a villa near his own, and then joined his party whenever he felt

so disposed. The place was known as "Il Paradiso," which title the poet seized upon as a fair subject for illustration. He was only able to produce the following—

> "Beneath Blessington's eyes,
> The reclaimed Paradise
> Should be free as the former from evil,
> But if the new Eve,
> For an apple should grieve,
> What mortal would not play the devil."

This tribute to her attractions did not satisfy the new Eve, and she requested some original verses for her album. The poet complied; but alas! in those well-known stanzas, commencing "You have asked for a verse," he proved that the inspiration was totally ineffective—excusing himself by the plea that "his heart was as grey as his head." The lady, of course, was still more dissatisfied; there was not a line written in honour of Mary Anne Chaworth but what was well worth volumes of such tame compliments. Lady Blessington wrote a reply in the same versification, which unquestionably possesses more earnestness; nevertheless, no second attempt at poetry about her was made by Lord Byron.

On her asking for some ornament that he was in the habit of wearing as a memorial, he presented her with a gold cameo pin; but the next day reclaimed it as unlucky, sending a Venetian gold chain in its place. With this shadow of gallantry, the hitherto all-subduing Tipperary beauty was forced to proceed on her way. She certainly also received from him an

Armenian Grammar, but this was still less acceptable as a *gage d'amour*. In her diary she does not conceal her discontent with the donor; but it was in a much more pretentious work, subsequently published under the attractive title of "Conversations with Lord Byron"—unquestionably, to a large extent, imaginary—that she displayed her feelings.

By the way, in recording in her diary the noble poet's parting with the Countess Guiccioli, after noticing her more fortunate rival's distress, Lady Blessington adds: "Such is one of the bitter consequences resulting from the violation of ties never severed without retribution"—evidently quite oblivious of her own violations at the expense of poor Captain Farmer.

During their Italian tour, the Blessingtons continued to astonish the natives by their style of living. The Irish earl's prodigality was exceeded by that of the Irish beauty, who had become so fastidious in her taste that Italian ideas of luxury could not keep pace with it. The Villa Belvidere, at Naples—the palace of a prince—scarcely contented her. Yet here she condescended to receive all that was most distinguished in English and Italian society for two years and a half.

The spoiled beauty had left Rome in a hurry, and in as sudden a caprice she now returned to that capital. Other cities were then visited, till her party found themselves again at Genoa in the spring of 1823. Here intelligence reached Lord Blessington of the death of his heir, Lord Mountjoy, a boy in his tenth year, and the extent of the infatuation of

which he had become the dupe may be imagined by the fact that a few months afterwards he was prevailed upon to execute a will, settling his estates in Dublin on Alfred, Count D'Orsay, provided that he married Emily, known as Lady Harriet Gardiner, then barely twelve years of age, the testator's daughter by Mrs. Browne. The marriage, however, did not take place till December, 1827, when the Blessingtons were at Rome, living more than ever in luxury, in the Palazzo Negroni, at the rate of 1260*l.* a year.

It has been incorrectly stated that Lord Blessington, observing the handsome young Count's attentions to his *cara sposa*, was informed by her that they related solely to his daughter, of whom he was a professed admirer, and that his Lordship then and there insisted on uniting them in wedlock; but Count D'Orsay had never seen the young lady till she had been sent for from school to realize her father's intentions in his favour, as expressed in his testamentary arrangements four years previously.

The party, with this addition, continued their tour, returning to Paris in June of the following year. Here all former magnificence was thrown into the shade by these new Squanders of Squander Castle. The Hôtel Ney was fitted up in a style that the Parisian upholsterers, at least, regarded as marvels of French taste. Surely the daughter of poor "Shiver the Frills" must have been satisfied when she entered apartments prepared for her by her anxious lord, which have been thus described by herself:—

"The bed, which is silvered instead of gilt, rests

on the backs of two large silver swans, so exquisitely sculptured that every feather is in *alto relievo* (!), and look as fleecy (?) as those of the living bird. The recess in which it is placed is lined with white fluted silk, bordered with blue embossed lace; and from the columns that support the frieze of the recess, pale blue silk curtains, lined with white, are hung, which, when down, conceal the recess altogether."

This is only one feature in the excessive luxury with which her ladyship now found herself surrounded—at the expense of one who had long been completely insolvent, and had beggared a fine estate by mortgages, bonds, and encumbrances of every possible kind. But in this race down hill, the lady took the lead of her foolish husband, only thinking apparently of the eminent state she was enjoying, and the great company it attracted around her.

Among other follies in which Lord Blessington indulged was one wherein he had himself painted, in a large picture, in his chariot, as "Achilles," while a friend of his sat, or rather *lay*, with his heels tied together, to be delineated as the dead body of "Hector," in the act of being dragged in savage triumph around the walls of "Troy."

Considering the remarkable obliquity of the noble lord's eyes, he, if the likeness was retained, must have made but a sorry victor. What sort of a corpse his friend made, whether agreeable or otherwise, I never knew.

On the 23rd of May, 1829, her career received a check by the sudden death of Lord Blessington. In

looking into his affairs it was discovered that this most improvident of Irish noblemen had left his estate burdened with *mortgages* to the amount of 47,846*l.* 3*s.*; *legacies*, 23,353*l.* 16*s.* 11½*d.*; besides 40,000*l.* to Count D'Orsay, and 9,230*l.* 15*s.* 4½*d.* to his wife; *annuities*, 7,887*l.* 5*s.* 9½*d.*; *judgments*, 13,268*l.* 1*s.* 6½*d.*; *bond debts*, 10,357*l.* 9*s.* 2½*d.*; *promissory notes*, *I.O.U's.*, &c., 10,122*l.* 19*s.* 11*d.*; *simple contract debts*, 6,401*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*, and other *mortgages* to the amount of 20,184*l.* Of the lands of this genuine Irish landlord the rental had diminished nearly one-third, and at his death amounted to 22,718*l.* 14*s.* 7*d.* It was thus made manifest to the widow that the splendours of the Hôtel Ney must be abandoned; but she did not return to London till November, 1830. The mansion in St. James's Square had been bequeathed to her with its contents. It was let to the Wyndham Club, and about the end of the following year Lady Blessington fitted up a smaller residence in Seamore Place, May Fair. Here she commenced a new career, gathering around her as many distinguished people as she could entertain, and queened it amongst them with a magnificence only a little less regal than she had done in Italian and French palaces.

Not, however, without one or two disagreeable incidents that must have caused her a good deal of annoyance. In the first place, the Countess D'Orsay had become aware of her real position, and had insisted on a separation; in the next, a bill in Chancery had been filed against her; and, two years

later, thieves broke into her house at night and carried off plate and jewellery to the amount of 1000*l.*

In the year 1836 Gore House, previously the residence of the pious William Wilberforce, became the head-quarters of the *demi-monde*, with the Countess of Blessington as their queen. Her diminished resources she endeavoured to augment by the aid of her pen. She had made her first essay as an authoress in 1822, when she published two different collections of short pieces. Ten years later appeared in Colburn's "New Monthly Magazine," then edited by her friend Mr. Lytton Bulwer, her "Journal of Conversations with Lord Byron," published separately shortly afterwards. It attracted considerable attention, and was universally received as genuine. The bulk of the alleged conversations I believe to be as imaginary as those of Walter Savage Landor; moreover the feminine pique which predominates throughout, renders them totally untrustworthy. They, however, answered the purpose of making the authoress a centre of attraction to a certain portion of the fashionable world of London. In the year 1834 the celebrity she had obtained in the literary and male fashionable world caused her to be engaged to edit the "Book of Beauty," one of the prettiest of the pretty annuals. Lady Blessington had the previous year contributed to "The Keepsake," which contained some of my productions, and I continued to write for it for several years under its first editor, Mr. F. M. Reynolds, and under his latest successor, Lady Bles-

sington, at whose request I also contributed to her "Book of Beauty." This literary association naturally brought me often to Gore House, and I had therefore plenty of opportunities for witnessing the queen of a certain male society, lauded and toadied by her innumerable admirers.

One of the most earnest was Walter Savage Landor, who praised her in verse and prose; the elder Disraeli, even to his eightieth year, sought the same inspiration; Tommy Moore elicited, at least, one pretty, but not original, idea on the same subject.

"I heard o'erhead
My name as by a spirit said;
And, looking up, saw two bright eyes
Above me from a casement shine,
Dazzling the heart with such surprise
As they who sail beyond the Line
Feel when new stars above them rise."

George Colman's hymn of praise was sung as far back as August, 1819; so that Lady Blessington had thus early commenced levying poetical compliments on her friends. Another humourist, James Smith, one of the authors of the far-famed "Rejected Addresses," whom I think I remember as a gouty old gentleman, supported by crutches, invoked the muse several times in her favour. The American, N. P. Willis, the china-collector, my dear good old friend Ralph Bernal, and numerous others known and unknown to fame, offered her the same incense; but the best of them are flat and feeble when compared with the verse that has

rendered immortal the charms of the unpretentious wife of my friend Jack Musters.

Among the *habitués* I remember Lord Castlereagh as a handsome, good-humoured, careless young man, who scarcely did justice to his own talents, which were above the average. He wrote poetry with considerable facility. One volume he had privately printed some years later, and had previously published a journal of a long tour he took in the East, after his duel with a certain signora's husband, in which he was shot in the arm. He had also contributed to the "Keepsake."

Another of Lady Blessington's intimate friends was Prince Louis Napoleon, then scarcely attracting notice, and regarded as a dreamer of the vainest possible dreams—looking, as he did, to a return of the Bonapartes to France in the zenith of the greatness of that most prudent of sovereigns, Louis Philippe. Who could have been so mad as to have expected, in the days of "the Citizen King," the restoration of the Empire of Napoleon? No one; and Prince Louis was permitted unnoticed to hold conferences with a few faithful compatriots, evidently fresh from Leicester Square—to look reserved and talk mysteriously. He was supposed to be merely a harmless refugee, almost without resources, and with scarcely an influential friend.

His last public appearance in England was at Lord Eglinton's tournament, where the remorseless rain had spoilt the spectacle, vexed the Queen of

Beauty, damped the jokes of the selected jester, and made the whole sham supremely ridiculous. The chief Knights had been driven to their wits' ends, instead of the points of their lances, to prevent yawning in each other's faces. The tournament was what D'Orsay said of the statue of the Greek slave —"a splendid failure." The nephew of the great Emperor then and there astonished his English friends by assuming an unusual degree of liveliness —possibly to hide the anxiety he must have experienced, for he was then about to start on the identical expedition, with the tame eagle and a handful of desperate adventurers, that led to his captivity in the fortress of Ham.

At that time he had published one or two literary productions, including *Les Idées Napoléoniennes;* but they attracted very little attention—no one having the foresight to know that in the course of a few brief years the same unappreciated, quietly observant and clever author would write another work which should be simultaneously published in the principal European languages, and sold by hundreds of thousands throughout the civilized globe.

But there was a difference. The amusing French *emigré* at Eglinton Castle, and the undemonstrative foreign gentleman at Gore House, has since become Emperor of France, has won the battles of Magenta and Solferino, and has shown to his own subjects, as well as to the old dynasties of Europe, that he can rule and mediate as well as conquer. He has taken the title of Napoleon III.; but notwithstanding

all the disturbing elements by which the imperial throne is surrounded, there is pretty safe evidence for believing that he will maintain his position. Whether he can secure it for his son, the notorious fickleness of the French people alone renders problematical.

The Emperor is our good friend and ally; and as I believe him to be the only sovereign in the world who has the head and hand to rule in France, may success for ever attend him in his own country! I should have liked him better had he interposed in favour of the Danes when they were unfairly dealt with by Austria and Prussia; and not have looked on grimly, as if waiting for an opportunity to interfere to the disadvantage of a neighbour, when the neighbour should get embroiled with old allies. But I suppose it is excusable as a Napoleonic idea, like the occupation of Rome to support the Pope against subjects sick of his rule, while in France independence of papal influence is generally encouraged. I do not despair yet that he will teach those meddling and mischievous Jesuits and narrow-minded Ultramontanes a lesson, for which society would remain his grateful debtor. I should have liked him, too, much better if he had sided at once, as I believe he would have been glad to have done, with the Southern heroes of America.

Wherever a man of note was to be found, the enterprising Irish lady, still good-looking, was sure to press him into her service. He was either induced to write verses in her album, or enter into a correspon-

dence with her; when she had materials to find for her annuals she urged him for contributions, foreign or English, and the higher the rank or greater the celebrity the better—all were made to furnish literary capital to their charming friend. The collection of letters and poems addressed to her, which fills three thick volumes, edited by Dr. Madden, shows the extent of her influence in this way.

There may be found the epistolary talents of Prince Schwarzenberg, Chamberlain of the Emperor of Austria; of Count Matuschewitz, of the Russian Imperial Chancellerie; of Dwarkanauth Tajore, a Prince of Hindostan; of Namiz Pacha, and one or two oriental magnates of the first class; of the Duc d'Ossuna, le Vicomte d'Arlincourt, Comte Alfred de Vigny, Casimir de la Vigne, Eugene Sue, Frenchmen of exalted fame; and of the Archbishop of Tarento, an Italian ecclesiastic.

These and scores of others, with almost equal pretensions, are made to disclose their progress in the Academy of Compliments, when the resources of the French and Italian languages are exhausted in expressions of homage and admiration. Lady Morgan was twitted with displaying her intimacy with *dead* heroes and heroines, but Lady Blessington had an Irish spirit that soared far above such petty ambition; all her dear friends were her contemporaries, and she could triumphantly display unquestionable evidence of the extraordinary regard they either did or pretended to entertain for her.

There seems to have been only one man with whom

she ever came in contact who was insensible to her attractions. This was Thomas Campbell, the poet. Whether his Scottish shrewdness detected the electrotype character of the glitter with which so many minds had been dazzled, is not known; certain however it is that he did not like her. She tried her fascination on him in vain—the canny Scot shied from her hand, like a Highland sheltie unused to Southern caresses, and she failed to add him to the list of her aiders and abettors.

Among the most welcome visitors at Gore House were my friend Edward, and his brother Henry Bulwer —then men of promise, rather than of performance—a promise that has been fully realized intellectually and politically. In the younger, we see the present Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart., of Knebworth Park, the author of so many admirable novels, poems, and dramas, and the popular Secretary of State for the Colonies of the last Conservative administration; my gifted, firm and faithful friend. In the elder, we have the clever ambassador at Constantinople, the only fit successor to the English Metternich, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. There was a marked difference in the manner of the brothers—the better known of the two, as the author of "Pelham," being eminently social and pleasing—the other as eminently quiet and reserved.

My friend, Disraeli the younger, as well as his father, was often a guest at Lady Blessington's. He was not a Conservative leader then, though to my mind there was always a marked cleverness about his ob-

servations and conversation, which fitted him for any position he chose to assume. When he failed in his first memorable speech in the House of Commons—memorable from its failure in contrast with his subsequent brilliant success—I observed at the time that the House decried him, not because he wanted eloquence, but because he was too choice and flowery in his expressions to suit them. His closing prophecy is well known:—"That the time should come when they, the House, would be glad to hear him." He resumed his seat, and lived to realize the truth of it to the fullest possible extent. But it is not so well known that Sir E. B. Lytton, his subsequent colleague, when he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, predicted his oratorical success; nevertheless, he was already a man of mark as the author of "Vivian Grey." He, too, was distinguished by an unassuming manner, and when he accompanied his father, through his filial devotion to the veteran scholar—then enjoying his well-earned fame as the author of the "Curiosities of Literature," "Calamities of Authors," &c.—the eyes of every observer were upon him.

But there were scores of individuals who filled a much larger space in the world's consideration at the period to which I have been referring, and therefore attracted more attention at Kensington Gore. Prominent among these were the two great Lord Chancellors, Lyndhurst and Ellenborough, and the accomplished scholar and statesman, the Marquis Wellesley; Lord Brougham also was content to relax from his severe labours in that pleasant circle. I do not recol-

lect seeing the Duke of Wellington at the *conversaziones*, but he visited the House to patronize the artistic genius, D'Orsay, whose portrait of him, and equestrian statuette, have been greatly admired. Lord Normanby, a novelist as well as ambassador, had been one of the lady's friends in Italy; Lord Durham, Lord Chesterfield, and my dear friend, the kindly warm-hearted Lord Castlereagh (now Marquis of Londonderry), assisted in filling the reception room, and in giving a tone of gaiety as well as fashion to her agreeable parties.

D'Orsay almost invariably was present on these occasions. At first he lodged in Curzon Street, but having been arrested by his Parisian boot-maker for 300*l.*, and dreading many other inconveniences of a similar nature, he became domiciled at Gore House, where he carried on his artistic labours. His profile sketches of people in the fashionable world, 125 in number, nearly all of whom were visitors at Kensington Gore, were published by Mitchell, in Bond Street; but, as a portrait-painter, as well as a sculptor, he had more than sufficient ability to have earned for himself a handsome maintenance had he kept steadily at his work.

Sometimes the scenes got up at Gore House for the entertainment of the general company, were more diverting than edifying. D'Orsay excelled in banter, and whenever he had an opportunity, made great fun of some ridiculous peculiarity he had observed in a Frenchman of the old school; the victim had been a minor official in Paris during the Reign of Terror, but was then as amusing a representative of his nation as ever was caricatured on the English stage.

Having made his customary appearance, D'Orsay would recognise him with immense gratification, and then entreat his *bon ami*—"Ah, ha! mon ami!" was his favourite expression—to favour miladi and her distinguished guests with a recitation of a certain extraordinary poem he was known to have written. The old gentleman was invariably modest and retiring, made innumerable excuses, feigned humility, inability, and dislike of appearing in public, and showed that nothing was further from his thoughts than making the proposed display; but, on some of the Count's confederates coming up (of whom James Smith was sure to be one), and adding their entreaties, the harmless revolutionist drew forth from his pocket a well-known scroll of paper, and, permitting himself to be led to a conspicuous elevation, there, amidst exaggerated signs of attention, he proceeded to declaim his French verses. French declamation is pretty sure to be more or less theatrical, and French poetry is often bombastic; but the style of the reader in this instance out-Heroded the fustian he had written.

The composition, if I remember it rightly, narrated the disappointments the author had met with in his career—a string of miseries highly excruciating to the feelings of the audience; nevertheless D'Orsay sat near his melancholy compatriot, looking into his ludicrous visage with the most solemn interest, and encouraging him with expressions of intense admiration and profound regard, while the confederates, with countenances equally grave, added now and then a murmured chorus of praise and regret.

So completely was the poor Frenchman made the

dupe of their simulated sympathy, that he would get so excited as to weep at the conclusion of his sorrows. Then, in profound silence, D'Orsay would lead the lugubrious performer by the hand to the chair of state in which Lady Blessington was seated, and the once-gorgeous beauty, as serious as her friends, would express her applause and commiseration. Finally, he would as tenderly lead back the victim to his seat, never moving a muscle of his handsome face as the loud plaudits of the company expressed their admiration of the part *he* had played in the tragic-comedy they had so witnessed.

The sister Ellen, who had figured at the trial already noticed, had married a Mr. John Home Purvis, one of the numerous sons of Sir Alexander Purvis, of Purvis Hall, Berwickshire—a very good marriage for her; but she was an Irish beauty, fond of change, and followed the example of her fortunate, as well as unfortunate sister, in abandoning her husband as soon as he obtained an appointment abroad in the year 1823. It is not unlikely that Lady Blessington's interest procured for her brother-in-law this move. He went to Pensacola as English Consul, and died there four years later. His widow, in December, 1828, concluded a marriage with the Right Honourable Manners Sutton, Speaker of the House of Commons. There was considerable magnificence in the mansion of one sister at Westminster, and at that of the other at Kensington; but another Speaker was elected in 1835, and Mr. Sutton was created Viscount Canterbury.

Lord Canterbury retired with a pension of 4,000*l.*

a-year, which was insufficient to support his new dignity; he was, therefore, obliged to retrench—and while this was in course of operation, he died. Lady Blessington then lost no time in trying to enlist for her sister the powerful aid of Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, but was unsuccessful. Their answers plainly assured her that no substantial aid would be contributed by the Government, as Lord Canterbury left a will in which ample provision was made for the surviving members of his family. They may have thought that assistance was unnecessary, and as Lady Canterbury died four months later, November, 1845, leaving china, plate, jewels, and other real and personal property to the amount of something near 10,000*l*., they cannot have been very far wrong.

The other sister, Mary Anne, who had been the companion of Lady Blessington's tour, had been disposed of in marriage to an old French Count, in 1831; but again there was a separation, and Madame la Comtesse Saint Marsault returned to Ireland, and lived with her father in his very reduced circumstances. In 1837, worn out with bodily sufferings, the poor old buck breathed his last, characteristically boasting, almost with his last breath, that he had been able to enjoy his four or five tumblers of punch the preceding night.

Lady Blessington had also two brothers. Michael, who died a Captain of Infantry in the West Indies, and Robert, who was also a Captain, but quitted the service in 1823, and apparently acted as agent for the ruined Blessington estates. The property was now in Chancery, from which only her dower of 2,000*l* a-

year, and a small provision for the Count D'Orsay, were available, to maintain the waning splendour of Gore House. D'Orsay's debts had reached a frightful amount, about 120,000*l.*, and he was forced to remain in close concealment to prevent being again arrested.

He had long been sought by bailiffs, but by great vigilance, and by keeping within the walls of Gore House, he contrived to avoid them, amusing himself with painting and sculpture, and by way of bodily exertion and sport, "by stalking sparrows," as he called it—to shoot them with, I believe, a pea rifle in the garden. He was taken at last; but on each succeeding Sunday Chesterfield, with characteristic good nature, used to drive him out in the Park, and there myself, among others of his friends, had again opportunities to shake him by the hand.

Lady Blessington's liabilities had long been far beyond her means of meeting them, even with the assistance of her reputation as an authoress. Her notoriety at first led publishers to speculate largely in her productions, till the thoroughly worthless character of some of her novels of fashionable life became so well known, that the libraries would not take them. The estimate of her productions by a celebrated critic is thus expressed:—"They really possess no merit whatever * * * * they are loosely and ungrammatically worded, and are thoroughly pervaded by bad taste and disreputable morals. The gross sensuality of the men, the vanity and petty deceitfulness of the women, cannot be estimated by anyone who has not read 'The Governess,' 'The Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre,' and 'The Confessions of an

Elderly Gentleman.' Lady Blessington never took a pen in her hand to write a story that she did not immediately proceed to describe, in terms calculated to raise a blush on a modest girl's cheek, intrigues that would shock the morality of a green-room and the delicacy of a kitchen."* Of course, such compositions, if this review is fair, found proper appreciation at last, and the publishers refused them on any terms. It was then that both the lady and the Count fled to Paris to escape incarceration, and to commence a new career of extravagance.

On the 4th of June, 1849, Lady Blessington, as her lord had been twenty years before, was carried off by a sudden fit of apoplexy. After her death, D'Orsay busied himself with a fitting monument, in which last act he seemed to take a deep and mournful interest. It has been represented that her loss so profoundly affected him, that he very shortly afterwards followed her to the tomb; but I have good reason for believing that during her life he was as fickle as a French lover might be expected to be to a woman some years his senior. He survived her upwards of three years, dying then, not of a broken heart, but of an internal and far less romantic malady, on the 4th of August, 1852, in his fifty-second year.

Great blame has been thrown upon the Emperor of France for his apparent neglect of an old and useful friend; but soon after D'Orsay's return to Paris, he was heard to stigmatize perhaps the most brilliant *coup d'état* in history as the greatest political

* Jeaffreson's "Novels and Novelists," vol. ii. pp. 174-5.

swindle that had ever been played on a nation. It would not have been policy in the head of that nation to have given a post of trust to a man who had acknowledged sentiments so unflattering to the new *régime.* Besides this, D'Orsay himself was unpopular with the army, on account of his having thrown up his commission rather than serve with his corps, not *from* want of pluck, but *from* the love of women; and also among the gallants of France it was held to be derogatory to the high position in which a soldier and a gentleman of that chivalrous nation should stand, to throw over a handsome *young* woman for a handsome *old* one, although the younger of the two *did* chance to be the Lothario's wife, a position perhaps affording in the minds of some Frenchmen a reason for a trifling or pardonable infidelity. At last, however, when a representation was made to the Emperor of D'Orsay's urgent necessity, the President I should have said, for he was not elevated to imperial rank till the following December, appointed his old friend Director of the Fine Arts. Unfortunately this favour came too late.

Lady Blessington had been equally and unwisely offensive. "Are you going to stay long in France?" inquired the head of the then Republic, as their carriages stopped a few minutes side by side in a crowded thoroughfare. "I don't know," answered the fugitive lady saucily; "*are you?*"

If those who seek for favour thus block up their road to fortune, they ought to be prepared for failure, and blame no one but themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

TAYMOUTH CASTLE.

Hospitality at Taymouth Castle—Lord and Lady Breadalbane—Interesting localities—Loch Tay and the Island Priory in 1860—Highland venison—Eel and trout fishing—Legend of "Golden-haired Mary."

WHEN I look back to the days I have spent in Taymouth Castle with the late Lord and Lady Breadalbane, and on the sports and pleasures his princely residence afforded, the entire retrospect seems but a beautiful dream. There was a time when the bloom came on the heather, and the fly to the streams, when the usual hearty welcome of the Highland Chief would reach me, and I should shake the dust of the English acres and of the lowlands from my feet, and once more revel in the mountain scenery and pursuit of mountain game, while sharing his hospitality. Breadalbane knew that if he neither wanted venison, red or fallow, nor game, that I could be happy with my rod and line, and never be an incumbrance on his leisure.

When parting to go to our rooms at night, he would say, "I'll send you in the carriage to one of my moors for grouse," or "I want a stag and a brace of fallow bucks, if you'll kill them."

I fancy that I can see him now come into the breakfast room, when the appetite of his guests was

nearly appeased by the many appetising delicacies that had been set before us, and with the good-natured smile and wave of his hand give us all good morning. How excellent were the nicely broiled fresh trout! indeed, how superlative was everything! I must be pardoned for eulogizing my dear departed friends, for they were extremely kind to me when I most needed such affectionate sympathy; if possible, more kind then than when I was in the humour to amuse my entertainers; and while I live I must deplore the loss of the gentle, kind, and graceful lady, and the friendly heart of the splendid Highland Chieftain.

It may be supposed that with my inclination for tales of the olden time, and romantic legends, that in the localities with which I then became familiar I found ample enjoyment. Often, when sitting in my boat on Loch Tay, pulled by a most steady park and game-keeper and his assistant, and spinning a small trout to tempt the larger ones of seven, eight, and nine pounds, have I recollected that I was on the site of Scott's beautiful tale of "The Fair Maid of Perth," and that on the bosom of that lake, according to Scott, went the funeral barge of Gilchrist Mac Ian, the Captain of Clan Quhele, towards the Island Priory, where still rests the dust of Sibilla, daughter of Henry I., the wife of Alexander I. of Scotland.

Naturally, therefore, I often paused in my fishing to explore the lovely bays of that splendid inland sea; and during the time that I lunched and refreshed my attendants, while they rested from their oars,

have I traced each shaded inlet, and bright and pebbly strand, into the loneliest nook the shores afforded.

On returning from fishing, and with a little time to spare, often have I dismissed my men and pulled my boat back to the Island Priory, and, seated on a fragment of the ruin, seemed to hold converse with the dead of former ages, and to be able to trace the site of the graves once honoured with religious veneration, but now lost to the eye, to the heart—and even to the worm.

Scott speaks of this ruin in 1828 in his "Chronicles of the Canongate," as being then almost a "shapeless mass, overgrown with wood." The last time that I lingered on the little isle, in 1860, it was shut out from my view from the land by the overgrowth of large trees. Their boughs sweeping to the water gave shelter to the wild duck, and in the growth of weeds on the ruined walls the water-fowl made their nests. In my mind's eye, however, I beheld the structure as it once was, and could even fancy I felt the glow of the old kitchen fireplace still visible; but wild as my dreams were, and anxious as I was to produce a tale to give to Lady Breadalbane, I was unable to obtain direct inspiration, and at last quitted the island, shot by the rapid current through the arch of the bridge beneath which the river Tay springs to life, and then gaining the lawn below the lodge where the Queen once landed, reached the Castle barely in time to dress for dinner.

At dinner, just from the loch, there, perhaps, was

the eight or nine pound trout, as red as a salmon, and as good, that I had sent home to be dressed, then followed the fat haunch of the best fallow deer venison I ever tasted.

"You have chosen well, Berkeley," Breadalbane would exclaim; "they tell me you always hit them in the right place, hey? No damage to haunch or neck; can't always say that of others."

Some people like stalking the red stag best, but in such wild forest parks as belong to Taymouth, I would sooner select the best buck—and wild enough work it is too—watch and wait till I could pick him off in the right place, than labour all day to get one shot at a stag that when grullocked, though of the right age, was neither fat nor very good lean venison.

When I say this, I do not mean to allege that there are not stags in the Highlands that are very fair venison, and pretty fat, but I never either killed or saw a Highland stag so fine as those in the English parks, nor with anything like such antlers, nor ever tasted one that was equal to the venison of an English hart.

After a considerable sojourn at Taymouth Castle, in the October of that year, Breadalbane resolved to go to the Black Mount, or "Forest Lodge," as it has more recently been called; and as he said he went to get things in proper form, he asked me to follow him in a couple of days, and in the meantime to go and see his place of Auchmore, at the other end of the

loch, and from the inn to amuse myself with his boat for fishing.

I did so, and set lines for eels, and horrified the people, and the waiter at the inn particularly, by eating them for dinner. It was then I learned that an eel, when fried, is better dressed with the skin on, the Scottish cook, never having dressed "a water snake" before, had not the slightest idea of removing it, and excellent those eels were. I also caught, at that end of the lake, some pike, but no large ones, and several small trout.

In this visit to the inn, on the last afternoon of my stay, as I was lounging along idly in my boat, the trout refusing to be tempted from the depths or shallows, I came to a little island near the shore, but in the midst of deep water. It was a remarkable object, for, small as it was, and almost submerged, the depths of the lake were black in profundity to its very edge, and it had no other island to share with it the lovely bosom on which it seemed to sleep.

"Has that island any name?" I asked of my boatmen, struck as I was at once with its curious position and the beauty of the wooded hill above.

"Golden Mary's Isle," replied the man; "and I'm just thinking 'twill nae be here much longer, for every year it gaes down deeper into the waters, and has been doing so, as the auld folks say, this mony a day."

"Golden Mary's Isle!" I repeated to myself,—"who was she? She *must* have been, or that island would not have borne *that* name!"

Doubtless she was beautiful, with long golden hair, not absolutely red, but varying from that hue to auburn, and of lustrous sheen whenever the sunbeam kissed it, which of course the sunbeam did whenever it could! like, but lighter, than poor dear Lady Breadalbane's rich brown and auburn-tinted hair, which, in the days of youth and beauty, held the mighty chief in bonds as strong as adamant.

Debarking then on the little isle, I examined every feature of the landscape, gazed on the wooded hills, and higher mountain tops, and on every bend of the placid lake around me; and it was not long before I picked up, among Highland seers and local gossips, the history of the fair maid who gave the place its name.

GOLDEN-HAIRED MARY.

In the ancient days of border warfare, when, as between England and Scotland, men had to maintain themselves by their own right hands, there resided with her family, on what might be called the debateable land, a beautiful girl, whose long silken hair had won for her the above appellation. Her family was sprung from strictly Scottish blood, of both the Highland and Lowland country strain; and she was the only sister to nine brothers. Her parents were both of them dead at the time to which my tale refers; and she had, though then but seventeen years old, by common acclamation been appointed sole mistress or housekeeper to her family, when, as her elder brothers were constantly from

home, either foraging on the English side or hunting, much of her time was left at her own disposal. This lovely girl was in height somewhat below the middle stature, but her figure was rounded in the fullest perfection of beauty. To a complexion of the most dazzling fairness, though tinted with those delicate and contrasting hues that speak of health, and, even when touched by the sun, only contrast the more with the snowy whiteness in other places, she added large—not too large—bright blue eyes, the heavenly colour of whose orbits seemed to have tinted the whites around them with the lightest possible blue from their own depths—a colour so often perceptible in the eyes of children, or in the eyes of those who have neither looked long upon the world, wept much, nor shared too largely in its passions. Her lips were well formed, expressive, and beautifully red; with teeth like the pearls found in some of Scotland's rivers, and the waters at the head of the lake; and when she spoke it was in a tone that either in its gaiety or temporary sorrow touched the heart of all who heard her. The hair, when at times it broke luxuriantly and rebelliously loose from the fillet which bound it, fell on her neck and shoulders, even to below her waist, and left its admirers almost unable to say of what hue it was, so much did it seem to depend on a touch from the sun. There was nothing approaching to absolute red in it; but it was of that description of auburn in which a yellow or golden tint at times entirely subdued the light rich brown shadows, and hence arose the name of "Golden-haired Mary." When

left in her solitary house, with no other companion than her youngest brother, little Geordie—who, like all his brothers, was as red as the veriest carrot, and as freckled in the cheeks as if a sunbeam possessed of a pepper-box had sprinkled him with cayenne—she at first seemed to be dull and out of spirits. Latterly, however, she had become more sedulous in the neatness of her appearance while occupied in her daily duties, and ever and anon as she arranged her household affairs, she accompanied her actions with snatches from the romantic ditties then in vogue, of the old border ballad style, and occasionally glanced, perhaps oftener than had been her wont, at the only looking-glass in her cottage.

It was a glorious afternoon on which Mary sat at her door, with little Geordie playing at her feet on the grass, when a long, loud whistle reached her ear, which she knew to be the signal of her approaching brothers. They had all of them been absent some days, and were returning, as she knew by the low of cattle, with beasts for which they had not paid. Having risen to meet them, and counted heads, lest any of her relatives should have been left behind, she prepared to welcome them home with the substantial fare that their right hands had for some time placed within her command. All the brothers doted on their only sister, but nevertheless they would at times tease her on the smartness of her attire, or on any other account that might afford a pretext for the provocation of a blush, or induce her to angry repartee.

"Well, Mary," exclaimed her third brother, "there's

nae doubt but ye are smart; the mickle red cow must hae admired ye much at milking time!"

"Hoot!" exclaimed another brother, "if there be not a wild rose stuck in her bosom." And so saying, he attempted playfully to pluck it out. With a crimson hue that flashed in her cheek as the setting sunbeam on the snow, however, she guarded the flower, and put her brother's arm away, saying, "A weel, lad, just you let my flower alone; it's nae any odds to you."

"No," said a tiny voice from the ruddy little fellow rolling then on the floor, "it's nae odds to Charlie" (laying immense stress on his brother's christian name); but in the laughter arising from his elder brothers at what might now be termed "the rise out of Mary," the emphatic remark of the child was lost.

"Well, Mary, and what hae ye seen lately?" again went on Charlie, who was the teasing youngster of the tribe. "Ony bogles among the sauches? hae ye been ower sib we ony of the fays or fetches here anent? Ye can't be sae fine as ye are for naething."

"An ye'll be nae sae far off right, Charlie, when ye telt her that," exclaimed the little voice again on the floor. "Oh don't she just about strut through the glinting when she sees a faye!"

And saying this, the little fellow rose and, mimicking his sister's walk, went across the room swinging his scanty kilt from side to side with a graceful action, and going straight up to his brother Charlie, he held out his little red hand for him to take, and cried "Now, Charlie, just about you kiss it." The

action of the child was received with a roar of laughter by all but poor Mary, whose neck and face blushed as ever sauch-berry did. She rose to go out of the room; but thinking that her younger brother might probably talk more nonsense, she returned, and, amid the laughter, made him a sign to hold his tongue, when the little fellow, seeing that he had annoyed her, danced out of the room and said no more. Disconcerted as she had been at first, Mary soon recovered her usual frame of mind, and became as gay as ever; there was one in the company, though, who had not entirely lost the import of the child's words, nor his action neither, and he sat with a thoughtful frown on his brow.

Weeks rolled on, the summer in Scotland was nearly over, and what is called the harvest moon was in the ascendant, the autumn tints were everywhere, and many a maiden by this time had decked her hair with the berries from the mountain-ash. In one of those calmly beautiful evenings in October, when the young night seems to sigh over the departed and departing glories of a beautiful autumnal day, and when her brothers were still busied in getting in their harvest, Mary stood under an oak-tree in the wooded glen that adjoined the garden of her cottage. The moon was at the full, the sky was cloudless, and as she looked towards heaven bitter tears coursed each other down her cheeks. There was no sob, no other sign of anguish than the looks and tears gave, but in that look and in those silent tears were conveyed an excess of the saddest woe. A slight rustle in the

underwood near, and the tall form of a handsome man in the Lowland garb, and of one above Mary's condition in life, appeared; and—not this time simply taking her hand as alluded to by the child—in an instant Mary was in his arms and her lips assailed by kisses.

Neither spoke for some time, but at last the stranger holding her at arm's length, so that the moon-beam might take the place of his caresses, asked her, with a deep expression of surprise, "Why these tears?"

"Alas!" replied the now sobbing girl, her "ling" long golden hair falling almost to the ground, "Bertram, dear Bertram, we are detected. I told you it must be thus. My brothers know that some one comes to our trysting-place other than the native people; their suspicions have been aroused by something which fell from my little brother, and they have tracked a strange foot, as they say of a Southron, and of high degree, for that the leathern sole of his boot never saw the inside of a Scottish cottage nor the rude awl of a village workman. For your sake, for my sake, I pray you fly; for at this instant you may be traced, and then you know the odds against your safety, and the misery your arm in your own defence might inflict on me. For the love of Heaven, fly; fly, at least till happier times, and see me here no more."

"Dearest, darling Mary!" replied her lover, still holding her to his breast; "you know not what you

ask. You are all-in-all to me. To give you up is to die; and that, while you love me, I will not do. Were I free to claim you in the face of day, and to bear you hence, all doubt of the worship I entertain for this dear form should vanish; but as that cannot be, dear, gentle Mary, I must love on; and, if in secret, even then the sweeter, for that secret known only to ourselves."

"But—but, Bertram," cried the weeping girl, burying her face in the broad bosom on which her head reclined, "I—I am to be sent away. My elder brother has resolved, and all the rest agree to what he says, that these loved woods, are no longer a place for me, but that I shall be sent into the heart of the Highlands, to our relative who lives on the banks of Loch Tay, where, surrounded by the Campbells, they think no Southron foot will dare to tread. Yes—yes, Bertram, it will and must be so, and we are thus to sever. Hush!" cried the weeping girl, raising her head; "did you not hear a footfall?" And, as she said this, she swept back the long silken tresses of her golden hair from her face and ear, and looked over her lover's arm with intense interest.

"No," cried Bertram, "dearest, there is no step—I heard nothing; it might be but a roe-deer bounding away when it detected our presence."

"Roe, or no roe," cried a rough and furious voice, as Mary's elder brother broke through the bushes, and stood before them, "thou'rt a hart at bay—

and, eh!—for the Southron life." As he said this he dashed, knife in hand, on Bertram, but ere he seized him, he was clasped in his sister's arms.

"Fly, Bertram, fly!" cried the now frantic girl; "fly, as you love me—fly. Others will be here anon; strife between you is death to me. I pray you, for my sake, fly—fly!"

Her words were but too prophetic; a rush through the underwood, and the rest of her brothers appeared. Bertram had not an instant to lose. He dashed on the foremost of the throng, and as he attempted to close with him struck him to the earth; and then followed a loud yell of rage, and the rushing and crushing of pursuit, as Bertram sped away through the covert; and Mary, as her elder brother loosened the hold she had upon him, fainted to the ground.

Autumn and winter passed, and a spring's bright morning sun was flashing on the waters of Loch Tay, as they lay, in rest, reflecting the full height of the Bremmin Hill. On the south side of the lake the hills rose with less abruptness while girt with its waters, but, close upon the northern shore, the Island Nunnery looked gracefully down upon its reflected walls, with the grey sternness of the habits and lives of the votaries within, at that hour engaged in matins.

A boat, rudely constructed on the shores of the lake, was on the instant pulling to the strand, near which now stands the Free church of Scotland, and where the waters of the lake first begin to glide to

make the river that debouches from it. On the strand stood two men in the Lowland garb, and between them a girl wrapped up in a plaid, and with her face concealed from observation. The rowers of the boat were also two, but they were in the Highland dress of the Clan Campbell. Lifting the girl in their arms to carry her through the shallow ripple that lay between the greensward and the boat, they exchanged but few words, and then at once betook them to their oars. As the boat left the shore, however, adieus, by the waving of their hands, were exchanged between the girl and the two men from whom she had parted; and then the boat, impelled by the lusty rowers, sped up the lake in an easterly direction. It was a lovely day, and the mountains were free from mist. The end of the Bremmin Hill was soon passed, and so also the low land on the north leading up to Glen Lyon. The trout dimpled the surface of the water as they rose, and the whistling wings of the scared wildfowl enlivened the slumbering air; in the boat the girl sat as still as the air itself.

On, and still on, the rowers impelled their boat. The Otter's Rock on the south side was passed, and then soon after that, and after passing a broad bay, the boat began to make that peculiar bend in the lake which gives to the water the form of the letter S. After a pull of perhaps ten or more miles, on the south a beautiful little bay was passed, sheltered by wooded hills and protecting rocks, the scenery as lovely as artist's eye could imagine; yet Mary (for it was no other than Golden-haired Mary) sat as if she

saw nothing nor knew nothing, so still and woe-begone was her air and attitude. The head of the lake now loomed dimly in the distance; when for some cause or other, from a recumbent position, slowly and almost imperceptibly, or quite so, to the rowers, who were occupied with their oars, Mary sat upright; and, had there been anybody there to have made the observation, the folds of the plaid over her head seemed slightly to draw aside, and her sweetly bright and now intensely lit-up eyes were fixed on a curious rock on the south side immediately breaking out of the wood and running perpendicularly down deep into the lake. In front of this, imbedded in deep water, there looked up another small rock that legends say was made to be the death of a man placed there who could not swim, and had to choose between starvation and drowning. On the edge of that abrupt rock that broke so suddenly from the overhanging boughs, and ran so precipitously into the deep water, there was something not clearly discernible. It might have been a portion of the rock, for it was of a grey colour; or it might have been an idle fisherman, or, in fact, anything, and of no consequence, but Mary's eyes were fixed upon it. The boatmen whistled, and the boatmen sung; they looked up into the air, and they took no notice of Mary; so, without turning her head too much, or seeming to be interested in anything, Mary still looked on, and as she passed the rock she saw the slightest motion of a hand, and knew that that hand was Bertram's.

In those days, near Killin, and on what are now the pastures in which stands the gracefully picturesque mansion of Auchmore, and not far from where there is a keeper's cottage, there was a house inhabited by an old lady of the name of Campbell, and to the strand below her house the boat directed her course. There the old lady received Mary, and took her home.

Spring wore on, blackcocks assembled in flocks of sixty to carol on the meads, buds burst forth into bright green leaves, birds sang, and the shores of the lake resounded with the minstrelsy of thrush and wood-pigeon, while the trout seemed to live almost on the surface of the water. During this time it was often observed that Mary was frequently in the woods alone, and having procured a light skiff, with a little sail to it, which she managed herself, she as frequently visited one side of the lake as the other, and the gossips at Killin said that there was a stranger seen near her, who seemed to have no other occupation than to fish in the lake, or, by some accident or other, to be in her close vicinity. Rumour also said that he had taken up his residence at a cottage on the same side of the lake to that where Mary resided, and not far from the Otter's Rock.

Spring soon grew to summer, and the slopes of the mountains assumed an emerald hue, the heaths began to promise a more purple perfection, while the woods were dappled with the different shades of green afforded by the oak, the beech, the hazel, the larch, and many sorts of fir. The capercailzie had not then begun to

sound his note from the topmost boughs of the forest; it awaited a later chief to introduce the feathered king to the woods of his wide possessions, a bird eventually to colonize with his race the whole Highland country. Summer then reigned, and the gossips had talked so long and so much of Mary that they had tired of their occupation, and become less watchful, and Mary, beautiful Mary, was no longer subjected to their envious supervision.

One afternoon Mary stepped into her light skiff from the pastures whereon now stands Auchmore, and, gliding from the shore, she permitted a very gentle draught of air (aided by the impetus afforded by the rivers, the Dochart and Lochy, which ran into the lake) to bear her eastward, evidently in no haste, but as if to kill time till the approach of a given and a longed-for hour. She reclined in the stern of her boat, and gradually sunk into communion with herself, or in a mere idle inspection, perhaps, of the surrounding scenery. Behind her lay the tall grey towers, not then secluded by trees, of Finlaroig Castle, and at the back of that, again, the wooded sides of Glen Lochy. The castle walls were not in ruin at the period to which my tale refers, nor had ivy—that unworldly parasite, for it clings not to things that are prosperous: it loves to embrace those fallen and falling to decay—climbed its heights, nor hidden its rude strength from the gaze of day. It stood forth, as it had stood at the will of its "black" possessor, pierced for the arbalast, and in all the daring defiance of

power, the river running much closer to its walls than at the present time, and the swampy nature ot the land, as well as the river, affording it protection from the south. Mary had stepped into her boat, under sensations of joy andof anticipated pleasure; the healthful air and brightness of the day—as those adjuncts to the buoyancy of the spirit ever do—had coloured everything of the rose, and sent her forth in health, in happiness, and beauty, strong in life's best gifts, and without an idea of impending misfortune. But now those dark grey castellated walls, raising their frowning front above surrounding verdure, and o'er the burial-place of the mighty dead, and casting a shadow (for the sun was declining in the west) across a flood of light, struck gloomily on her heart, and seemed at once to awaken sensations of despondency. She roused herself, however, and turning from all gloomy retrospection or foreboding, looked on, as thoughtless advisers often tell us to do, when the chains of the past are rivetted in the very source of life, and fetter us with a power that the mind, however willing, finds it impossible to subdue.

Mary, nevertheless, looked on, and her joyous and expectant spirit returned to her heart more brilliantly than before. The cloud that had for an instant assailed it had darkened a thought; but health, the sun, the glittering lake, the joyous birds, and, lastly (though not the least), love rushed back to its throne, and again she became sensible to nought but ap-

proaching happiness. She thought then, as a wild rose on her bosom scattered some of its leaves in the lake, and as Moore was destined to live and sing—

> "That over the water for many a day
> The relics of love, ever honoured, will stray,
> While little the stranger shall care or shall know
> What wrecks of ambition lie buried below."

And as she thought thus, she now took the oars, and aided the sail in carrying her skiff still further down the lake, while she narrowly, and at the same time, scanned the northern shore. The sun sunk lower still, and now the sweet blue eyes of the lovely girl began to search the overhanging woods which in that spot grew down to the water's edge. More than once she started as a roebuck rose from his ferny lair, and gazed wistfully at the boat, but, ere she had passed, couched down again beside his mate, whose full and lustrous eyes had been peeping through the long grass. Still on she went, till at last the oars paused in their stroke above the water, but then dipped more deeply—the sail clung idly to the mast—the course of the boat was at once directed to the shore, and in another instant the bow of the little skiff grated on the strand—the intervening screen of boughs was parted, and a hand—Bertram's hand and arm—secured the anchor, and lifted his Mary to the land.

Beautiful and cloudless as had been the morning and noon of that day, on the horizon now there was a gathering of heavy clouds; and those clouds in tumbled masses, lurid and touched by edges of red, seemed to gather up rebelliously against

the struggling beams of the lord of day. I wonder if, on that sultry and thundery afternoon, those sullen black clouds, motionless as they seemed, and yet perpetually looming larger, and the white, ghostly-looking detached whisps of vapour that came on against the wind, and here and there masked or veiled the deep bright blue above them, were intended to prognosticate evil? Clever as the world fancies itself, and well read in the signs of heaven and of time as men suppose themselves to be, I often think that many things are intended for a gracious warning which we pass by or neglect as accidental occurrences. Yet it would not do to deem that we constantly read the shadows of coming events, for if we did, life would for ever be haunted with apprehension, and peace be no longer the blessing of the mind. On the evening of which I speak, had the bluff brow of Ben More put on a veil, that his eyes might not look below? Did Malcraith gird its waist with mist, that no noise might ascend to scare the quiet sheep that climbed the sides? or Shehallion keep its bosom bare, but to receive, hush, and give rest to echoes that would otherwise frighten the hills from their propriety, and scare the roosting eagles to the skies? Glen Lyon, too, seemed to sigh through the width of its cavernous passages, as if in apprehension of a coming storm, or that impending fate was pondering over some mortal catastrophe. From the Bremmin Hill to Ben Doran and the Braes of Glenorchy—from Ben Lawers, more immediately above the site of which I am speaking, to the falls of

Aberfeldy, all nature, with a listening dread, seemed to expect the thunder, or to brood over some approaching horror. Moments flew, when suddenly an untimely darkness seemed to have covered up the sun.

Oh, mercy! what a burst of thunder, afar in the heavens and high up in the wood! 'Twas not in heaven alone, but something on earth shrieked forth, and close upon sweet Mary's boat. Across the lake it thundered, and ascending to the lap of Ben Lawers, it seemed thence to reach the skies! The wrath of God and man have clashed in those dread sounds that rend the air: it was the crash of firearms in the hands of men that mingled with the artillery of heaven, and with them a shriek of mortal terror. The deer fled wildly from the braes, the wood-pigeon from tree to murky air, the eagle to the skies; for that fell volley was attended with so shrill, so dire a shriek of earthly woe, that all who heard it felt terror and a breaking heart, and recognised some hellish act of man. For an instant that shrill soprano outrang the thundering bass, and then an almost impenetrable silence hung on all around.

The echoes of that frightful disturbance had scarcely died away when the noise of one hastening through the wood and towards Mary's skiff, was heard; then, with a face full of frenzied terror, her golden hair streaming behind her, and even torn by the impeding boughs, the poor girl came

rushing wildly to her boat, and in another instant the oars, as if dashed beneath the wave with the strength of insanity, sent the light skiff out into the lake, and all further view was for a time shrouded by the lowering night. Not long after this, as the thunder pealed aloft, a blow, single, but desperately frantic in its force, was heard at the cottage door where Mary lived, and, as the door opened, she fell exhausted and fainting on the floor.

All Highland remedies at restoration were for a time tried on poor Mary, in vain; at last, however, returning consciousness brought back now but the misery of life, the agonizing recollection of a dreadful and an irremediable past. Prayers and entreaties from the good old lady with whom she was staying failed to beguile her of her frightful secret; when, on observing her inclination to taciturnity, and imagining that she required repose, she was left to herself, but not for rest. Night past, and when her attendant entered her room on the following morning, it was untenanted; but ere the consternation her unexpected absence occasioned had had time to spread, looking like a ghost, her beautiful hair still hanging below her waist, she came down the little garden to the cottage, apparently free from any outward excitement. With that innate good-breeding which is sometimes found in all classes of life, they left poor Mary alone in her room, and free from intrusion. For the remainder of the day, and the whole of the following night, when she

received the usual attentions from the lady and her servants, she uttered not a word.

It was on the evening of a rather dark and storm-threatening day, when a boat, pulled by four stout rowers, in the stern-sheets of which sat a grey friar, directed its course to the exact spot beneath the wood on the northern shore that, alas! had been sought by Mary in her skiff on the afternoon of the catastrophe already related. On reaching the shore one of the rowers assisted the old priest out of the boat, and then led the way up into the wood, followed by his companions. They proceeded thus for some short distance in silence, when, on attaining the shade of an old oak-tree, surrounded by larch and hazel, the boughs of which formed an almost impervious bower around it, the guide of the party held aside the intervening saplings, and, pointing to a dark mass among the beaten-down fern and trampled wild flowers, said, "There." The friar, crossing himself, knelt down, and knelt beside the corpse of Bertram. Burnt as portions of the clothes were, and bloody as the body was from eight closely-delivered gunshot wounds, the handsome face still gave the expression of love, mingled with cool and undaunted courage. At a sign from the priest, the men were about to lift the soulless form from the fern, when a slight rustle in the underwood startled them all, and in speechless horror they beheld poor Mary stand before them. On that spot she stood for a moment, statue-like and tearless; her attitude, as she paused over the form of her lover, permitted her long golden hair to

fall gracefully forward, while from the division of the tresses descending from her forehead, her white hands might be seen firmly clasped together. Used as the old priest had been to act in scenes of sadness, for an instant he stood aloof and contemplated this heartbroken spectacle. When at last he moved to lay his hand on Mary's arm, she fell upon the corpse and clasped it in her arms.

This could not be permitted to continue, for now the violence of her emotions were heard in sobs that seemed to shake her entire form, and the priest, with the assistance of one of the men, gently raised her from the ground, and took her to a little distance. The man then left her with the priest, and, joining his comrades, they raised the body of Bertram and bore it to the boat, in the bottom of which they laid it, concealed from view, and entirely enveloped in plaids. Apparently there had been some previous arrangement in this, for Mary followed, leaning on the priest's arm; and there, statue-like, she stood by the bow of her own little skiff, and saw them bear that which was once her lover up the lake, in an easterly direction, towards the island at the foot of the lake, on which stood the nunnery before mentioned. Long, and long, that impersonification of deep-rooted sorrow stood thus gazing on the boat, now fast disappearing in distance as well as in the darkness of coming night—listening, perhaps, to the chaunting of the dead man's mass. She might have remained there longer, had not one of those sudden and impetuous gusts of wind rushed

through the trees from out the mountain-passes, and almost driven her skiff from shore. As if in obedience to the suggestion of the storm, Mary started from her statue-like position, and, stepping into her skiff, propelled it to the waves.

The skiff, at first, seemed to follow the receding boat, but, on coming more out into the lake, the storm-gust caught the mast and, till then, idly-clinging sail, and in a whirl of driving mist and rain, and a rising sea, a shepherd from the hill above thought he saw the skiff fly helplessly through the gloaming towards the southern shore, and in the direction of a beautiful little bay, since known as Mary's Bay, and embosomed in overhanging woods. From the period of the removal of her lover's body from the wood, all is conjecture as to Mary's fate. The country people believe that this beautiful little bay, thus imbedded in the woods of Auchmore, towards which her skiff was driven or guided, is the site of Golden Mary's grave; for they say that there is ever in that bay a supernatural stillness on wood and water; that the leaves seem afraid to rustle; while the waves, when the rest of the loch is in storm and fury, never come into it, but break and die on the protecting rocks, as if in acknowledged obedience to some mystic power. To the calm sequestration and lonely beauty of this little bay I can attest, for I have often seen no other ruffle on it than that caused by the trout upon my line; and, certainly, when the lake, in a high westerly wind, was too rough for fishing, I found this bay as tranquil as a mirror, and the woods on three sides of

it, to an imaginative eye, looking down into the depths of its pellucid bosom, as if the sylvan deity of the spot sought to gaze on some lost and lovely treasure entombed in the pebbly bed below.

On the following morning, before which the high wind had shifted to the east, dark and stormy as it still was, an oar belonging to Mary's skiff was found in this little bay; but the skiff itself was stranded much nearer to the scene of Bertram's death, and on the northern side. Report says, that from the very day that this tragedy was enacted, this little island has gradually been sinking lower into the water. It is not more than shot-gun distance from the woods where the body was found, and a boat can pass with plenty of water between it and the mainland. On still nights the shepherds affirm that strange gurgling sounds, as of the death-rattle, arise from the small hollows of the stones that form the banks of this isolated spot, and to this hour the spot is recognised by the boatmen as "Golden Mary's Isle."*

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CHAPTER XII.

SPORT IN DORSET.

The Prince of Wales—Rev. William Butler finding a fox for the Prince—Rev. Henry Farr Yeatman's stories of his times—The valet's mistake—Taking the wrong horse—Good-nature of the Prince—Butler at Carlton Palace—Dorsetshire worthies—A parson catching fish—Securing a hare—Mr. Pleydell—Lord Portman—Dispute of Mr. Farquharson and Mr. Drax—My match at Charborough Park—How I failed—The late Duke of Manchester rebuking Fletcher—Otter hunting—A wet luncheon at Mr. Farquharson's—Facilities for sport in Dorsetshire—Sir Ivor Guest's ball.

When the Prince of Wales hunted the Dorset country from Critchill, a residence he had taken for that purpose, it was in the time of a celebrated old sporting parson of the port-wine school, to whom I alluded in my former volumes, known all over the country as "Billy Butler." The reverend gentleman had gained this notoriety not so much by wit or learning, or from having more sense than his neighbours, although he was by no means deficient in the knowledge of taking care of "number one," but as a sporting parson, telling you stories not much in accordance with his sacred calling, and never losing a chance, if he thought one effective, of playing into his own hands.

I can recollect my father saying that all country

parsons of his day of a certain stamp for qualifications and game certificates, were sure to be poaching or in mischief six days out of the seven, because on any day but the Sabbath they had nothing else to do.

Precisely in the same way, Billy Butler in riding or walking about the country, kept an eye on everything—where he *could*, and when he could *not* cut in for a shot at pheasants out at feed, he never ceased to remember where the best trout rose, or in what shallows the largest pike were to be found. So that if he received permission for a day's shooting or fishing, he knew where to seek for the best sport, and if he had an idle hour on his hands, and his larder was empty, he knew exactly where he might safely fill it, and that, too, without much reference to bounds. To know a great deal is decidedly good, but successfully to pretend to know more than you do is certainly often more serviceable.

When the Prince was hunting the country, Billy Butler had an eye to his good graces; he had the run of almost everybody's house, and everybody knew him; but to know the Prince, and to be seen in conversation with him, was one of the chief desires of my reverend friend, so he used to ride and walk about the country thinking how he could best accomplish the object of his heart.

On his Royal Highness's fixture being out for "Chittlewood," the instant it came to Butler's knowledge, he mounted his horse and rode up to the large Furze Brake, or Abbey Craft Gorse, a favourite

spot to hold a fox, and adjacent to the meet of the hounds. There was a labouring man at work there cutting the furze.

"Any foxes here, my friend?" said Butler to the man.

"Oh yes, zir," was the reply, "a many; if you'll go across there," pointing to a spot a couple of hundred yards' distance, "you'll ze where thay does roll about just a bit."

The parson repaired to the spot, and saw evidently the usings of a litter, and the marks very fresh.

"Hark ye, my friend," he cried, returning to the man, "here's half-a-crown for you. The Prince's hounds are coming here next week, so do you just knock off this place, and go a furze cutting on the far side of the brake, (the cover was very large and severe,) and keep it all as quiet as you can."

"Ees, zir," said the labourer, charmed with his reverence's liberality, and Butler returned home.

The day of the meet arrived, and the Prince drew several woods blank, and had no one spoken to him, Butler would have let them have had a blank day, although he knew of foxes close by.

"Come," said some of the field to the parson, "if any man can show his Royal Highness a fox you can; which way had the hounds better draw?"

"I'll be bound," replied Butler, "to find a fox in half an hour if the Prince will let me."

This assurance having been passed on to his Royal Highness, he immediately directed that the gentleman should come up to the front to make his

acquaintance, and thus the reverend gentleman obtained the introduction he desired.

"I am told, sir," said the Prince, "you can show us a fox."

"Yes, your Royal Highness," replied Butler, "I believe I can."

"Then lead the way," was the command, "and my huntsman shall follow you."

On approaching the Gorse, the sporting parson still thinking he could make more of his opportunity, turned to the huntsman and said, "Show me the Prince's favourite hounds. Two or three were pointed out, when to the man's inexpressible astonishment, Butler dismounted, and giving his horse to a whipper-in, seized on one of these hounds, and, taking him up in his arms, walked with the struggling and wondering animal into the middle of the cover. Of course the rest of the pack by this time had begun to feather, and to creep mysteriously into the gorse, when almost at the spot where Butler was with the hound he had carried in, another spoke; he dropped the one in his arms, and a rattling find was the consequence.

From that day forward Butler was a frequent guest at Critchill, the Prince being amused with his manner, particularly with his quaintness in telling a story. Dorsetshire is famous for its gossip, and tales of every kind; the reverend gentleman had them all by heart. He was, therefore, never at a loss for conversation, and was an amusing after-dinner companion.

Many of the old people, whose names and deeds

are now traditionary, who figured in these stories are, like the narrator, "gone to a better world," and their younger contemporaries are now dying out; I may therefore be pardoned if, assisted by my kind neighbours, I here endeavour to preserve some of the more entertaining of such narratives.

My late good and kind old friend—and long a Master of Hounds—the Rev. Harry Farr Yeatman, of Stock House, when I have been enjoying his hospitality, has told me many an amusing tale, and so has my old friend "Harry Biggs," in Wiltshire, who at one time was as keen and successful a courser as any in England; Biggs had them from other friends.

I was standing in his kennel yard one day, looking over his greyhounds, when such a hurricane was blowing over the Wiltshire Downs as I have seldom seen in any country. All at once, snap went a huge fir tree asunder, that grew over the kennel yard, and down it came with so sudden a smash that there was not even time to turn, and I saved my life only by stepping a pace backwards.

Once on a time when Yeatman kept fox-hounds, and the day before the kennel meet, with his usual hospitality he had thrown open his house to innumerable guests, and every bedroom was occupied. Among his expected visitors was a swell of the first water, but who he was, or what was his rank at this time, I do not remember. Wishing to put him in a room of extreme comfort, Mr. and Mrs. Yeatman, the latter then a very pretty woman, vacated their own chamber, and

went to a smaller one. When the visitor's servant came with his master's horse, sent in advance, having attended to the stall, he went up to the appointed chamber to put out the things for him to dress for dinner, as well as for the night, he acting as valet as well as groom. Having set everything in order, and tied a bit of string round the handle of the door by which to recognise it again, he retired to bed up his horse, and then to repair to a lodging in the village, as there was no room for him anywhere else.

Scarcely had he disappeared, when an express arrived addressed to the host, a few lines from the swell, expressing his deep regret that unforeseen business had prevented his keeping his engagement. They were evidently written in great haste, and contained no message for his servant. The latter, on the following morning, came of course, to call his master, and having had no communication with the indoor servants, simply gave an extra polish to the hunting boots, obtained a jug of hot water, and proceeded to his room.

He was merely a groom—indeed, little more than a helper in livery. He was naturally, therefore, rather nervous about finding the right room. As he proceeded he stooped to look for the bit of string round the handle of the door, and to anyone following him along the passage or corridor it would have seemed as if he had been amusing himself with peeping through all the keyholes. At last the identical handle was found, with the twine still upon it. Silently he opened the door, and the light from the window

falling into the side of the bed next it, he at once expected to recognise the familiar head of his employer. His fear, his horror, his nervous excitement may be imagined on beholding a man's head turned from him, and at the other end of the pillow a lady's sweet face turned to him, in a pretty nightcap trimmed with blue ribbons.

He stared with open mouth and trembling limbs. He could not be wrong; two locks might have had each a bit of string, but there could not be two men with precisely the same coats, trousers, dress-boots, and stockings—for there stood his master's clothes—there, too, the things he had put out in order over night.

Presently, more cautiously even than he had entered, did this inexperienced valet retire. A mouse could not have touched the carpet or gone through the door more delicately than he did. Like a ghost, or a man who had seen one, he went down to the shoe-house where other servants were at work, and seated himself on an unemployed block, where he looked the picture of despair.

"What's happened to you, Joe?" cried a servant who had made his acquaintance the day before; "you look as if you had murdered a turnip and sucked its blood."

"Happened to me! Lord, there's nothing happened yet; but it will. My eye, there goes the half-hour bell before breakfast! If *that* don't awake 'em, it *must be found out*, or there'll be a precious row."

"Wake them! Wake who? If there is anybody that you ought to call, why don't you do it?"

"There *is* somebody I ought to call, but I haven't the face to do it to t'other."

"To the t'other! not do it to the t'other! Who is t'other?"

"Lord, Lord! then I may as well tell it all, now t'other chaps is gone. I'm blessed if my young master aint abed with the prettiest woman I ever saw, and both on 'em fast asleep, as if it warn't just upon our breakfast hour and everybody about."

The poor man's apprehensions were presently relieved by a message from the under butler, by which he was made acquainted with his master's non-arrival, and the occupation of his intended chamber by its usual tenants, Mr. and Mrs. Yeatman. Of course his intrusion and his mistake caused immense fun throughout the crowded house.

The Prince of Wales, in his usual good nature, being aware that Butler was by no means well off, wished to make him a present; so one day his Royal Highness told him that he might go into his stable and select any horse he pleased. At least, this story has been told to me, but I cannot help thinking that there must have been some sort of reservation as to which stable the selection was to have been made from, or some joke in it, but having taken a very nice-looking chesnut horse, full of gratitude, Butler returned home in triumph with the royal gift.

More than a week passed, when it seems that a friend of the Prince having returned to Critchill, it was discovered that it was not really one of the Prince's horses that the sporting parson had been

permitted to take away, but a favourite horse belonging to one of his guests. His Royal Highness having been informed of this, he commanded his regret to be made known to the rev. gentleman that such a mistake should have arisen; but as, of course, the owner was entitled to have his horse, he should be happy to pay the full price of the supposed gift, and sent him 150*l.* Butler, though very glad of the money, was considerably annoyed at the change of circumstances. It was one thing to ride about Dorsetshire on a fine horse, the gift of his future Sovereign, and another to be possessed of a present of money which made no public show at all; so Butler went about rather depressed, and shaking his head at anybody who alluded to the subject, he kept muttering, "Put not your faith in princes."

It was not long, however, before he found that, in this instance at least, a reference to the old adage was unadvisable, for the first day he met the good-natured Prince after this transaction, "I'm sorry, Mr. Butler," the latter said, "that you lost your horse, but now go into my stable and take another." This was done; and the worthy man thus obtained something he could show, as well as a comfortable sum which he could apply to necessities.

It has been alleged that Butler was the only man to whom the Prince behaved well, but from all I have been able to learn, this was not the case; a good many more participated not only in the royal bounty, but in a general kindness of heart, by which, notwithstanding grave faults, his Royal Highness was characterized.

A noble lord, who was a great patron of Butler, put much pressure on the Prince to give the parson some preferment in London. This his Royal Highness offered, but Butler declined, saying that anything in Dorsetshire he should be happy to have, but as he had lived so long among his friends and neighbours in the country, he was resolved to end his days among them.

The Prince having told Butler that if he went to town he was to come and see him, a visit was paid to Carlton House by the reverend gentleman. On presenting himself to the porter at the gate, the scarlet and gold giant in the royal livery eyed him from head to foot, "What do you want?" he demanded.

"To see the Prince," replied Butler, with much confidence. "I am the Rev. Mr. Butler, of Dorsetshire, and I call by appointment."

The last words had a talismanic effect. The name was sent up; down came an usher of intense civility, and gave forth the order that Mr. Butler was to be admitted *immediately*. On being shown into the royal presence, the Prince shook him by the hand, adding in his usual style, "Glad to see you, Butler, by G—d; had no idea you *could* look so respectable; shouldn't have known you out of your boots. Sit down."

Butler used to say, when referring to this reception, "The Prince in London and in Critchill is a different man."

At the time of this interview, his Royal Highness had several of his personal friends with him, strangers

to the sporting parson, who felt that he was being shown up as an eccentric character, rather than as a hunting friend or as a respectable gentleman. As he preferred much to be laughed *with* than laughed *at*, he felt like a fish out of water, and used to say that on that occasion he felt very ill at ease, heartily wishing himself out of the Prince's presence, out of London, and back in the old shire.

He often dwelt on the difference of manner among the royal domestics towards him, on his first application for admission to the Prince, and on his return from his interview.

"As I came out of the apartments where the Prince was, down went the head of the fellow at the door, down went the heads of two others on the stairs; and on reaching the entrance hall door, down went the head of the rascal porter, who had at first treated me with such a look of disrespect."

No story with Butler ever lost by telling, and as the Prince's servants were notoriously the best mannered domestics that could by any possibility be found, I know very well that they did *not* "bow," nor touch their foreheads, nor make any other sort of sign of respectful recognition. A well-mannered servant only does this sort of thing when he has a hat on; when he is uncovered, he should be motionless as to any *sign* of acknowledgment, but quick and sedulously attentive in every other requirement.

Passing over "the jolly days when we were young" that Butler used to love to dwell on, the suppers, and the punchbowls of those times, that came after, and

then the pressing of the young ladies' hands under the table, which Butler seemed to think was a link between the bowl and bed, I now refer to some of his immediate contemporaries and kindliest friends. There was "Humphry Stuart, of Horton," "Blair," who lived in the house occupied now by my friend, Mr. Austin, who has most kindly contributed much of this local information to me, at "Ensbury;" "Pleydell, of Motcombe," Chapin, of Whittle, and his very great patron, Mr. Brown, of Frampton, of which living Mr. Butler was rector, who was most kind and liberal to him on all occasions.

If he at any moment received an unexpected visit from a friend, and not expecting one, his own larder was ill provided, he had the privilege of supplying it from Mr. Brown's, with this restriction, that he was to appropriate nothing *that had not been dressed.* To have given our reverend friend the run of a larder unrestricted would have been to have had no certainty as to the chief delicacy of an approaching dinner, for he was in the habit of doing things by his friends that really ought not to have been tolerated among gentlemen; but the most unwarrantable liberties, when taken by him, were ascribed to wit, or overlooked as the crafty eccentricities of an amusing man.

Butler dined with Mr. Brown whenever he liked, and always when he came to Frampton to fish in the river. He was a good fisherman, and on a favourable day was sure of a good dish of trout for dinner;

these he sent into the kitchen, or at least some of them, to be dressed that day. Somehow or other Mr. Brown more than once thought that his fish *ran unusually small*, and for this he could not account, knowing, as he did, that his friend was a first-rate trout fisher.

With some suspicion in his mind, the rector's patron resolved to clear up this point; so one day after a dinner, at which *a* dish of small trout of Butler's killing had been dressed, the latter was watched on his return home. It had been a beautiful day, cloudy, and with a nice breeze, and everything had promised a good fish from that well-preserved stream. Though the trout that had been cooked were small, the hospitable glass from which the old port wine had flowed had been large; and as the glorious close of that lovely day was yet bright in the ruddy west, there was plenty of light by which to see the rather unsteady foot of the rector traverse his way through the path in the mowing grass by the river. On coming to a particular stile, he was seen to steady his steps, and stop, when after some fumbling about in the long grass, he produced a good string of trout, much finer than those he had sent in to his patron's table, and, carrying them off, resumed his way home.

On another occasion, the reverend gentleman was hunting with the harriers, when by some chance or other, all the horsemen, except himself, for a brief space lost the hounds, and ere they came up again, the pack ran into and killed the hare close

to a hayrick, a part of which had been cut. No sooner had the first hound laid hold of the hare than Butler was down upon him, and among the pack, with his whip, and getting immediate possession of the game, he flung her up safe and high upon the square cut portion of the rick, whence only a few trusses had been taken. He then coaxed the harriers as far from the place as he could, but not far, for they were not to be so easily done; and when their owner and the rest of the field came up, he and they had all their heads up in the air, and were gazing about them for the next thing to do. The hounds making no cast, because they had killed their game, and Butler simply affirming that they had "thrown up," exactly as they were; whereas in reality he was the only party who had "thrown up," as the body of the hare would have proved, if they had looked on the top of the rick.

When Butler, with the greatest satisfaction, used to tell this story, he always concluded it with a sly wink at his hearers, accompanied by the words, "a hunted hare's no bad thing!"

Had I been the master of those harriers, such an unwarrantable interference from any man would have very considerably aroused my indignation. The hayrick was in Butler's way home; so when he bade his currant-jelly friends adieu, he did not fail to stop at it, and possess himself of his hunted hare.

I am perfectly convinced that many of the stories Butler told were myths of his own conception—such as his going out cub-hunting with the fox-hounds on a Sun-

day morning, and getting back again in time for church. That certain parties were in the habit of repairing to a given rectory after church, for the purpose of cock-fighting, that I can easily conceive, as it made no noise and created no irreverend display nor public scandal. If the parties themselves had the conscience to do so, no one was the wiser out of doors, and no one could interfere; but to take a pack of fox-hounds out, with all the accompanying noise and display, and uncertainty of where and when the sport would conclude, is a widely different thing, and I do not believe that even in Butler's time, Masters of Hounds, for in those days they were invariably noblemen and gentlemen, would have attempted so great an impropriety.

Among Mr. Brown's most intimate friends was Mr. Pleydell, of Motcombe, as exacting a gentleman as could be found in any part of the kingdom. My informant knew him only when he was a very old man, reclining on a very old chair, in which he had sat so often throughout his life, that they seemed to have grown part and parcel of each other. Nobody could induce the old gentleman to sit in any other. Mr. Pleydell kept a famous pack of harriers for the purpose of hunting roe deer, of which there were then a great many in the woods around him. In my time, the late Mr. Yeatman used to hunt roe deer with his harriers, and I have often seen these wild little denizens of the wood on the estates around Charborough Park.

Brown and Pleydell, though such loving friends, were perpetually quarrelling. One day a mutual friend of theirs, on seeing Mr. Brown by himself,

asked his gamekeeper, who was leaning over a gate where Mr. Pleydell was.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the man, touching his hat, "Mr. Pleydell's gone t'other way; they've had a blow up, they bean't on speaking terms just now, but they'll come together again soon."

When age made it necessary for Mr. Pleydell to resign his roe-deer hounds, their last meet was advertised at a given spot, and out of compliment to the old sportsman, the entire of Mr. Farquharson's hunt made a point of attending—very likely my friend, Lord Portman, who I believe was present, will remember the occurrence now. The hounds, when put into cover, were remarkably soon in full cry. If I am correct, the uncle of my friend, the present Mr. Austin of Kinson, was standing by the present Lord Portman when the full cry so suddenly burst forth, and his lordship, with that sharp discernment he ever had in sylvan as well as other matters, exclaimed, "I don't think they're on a deer!"

"Oh yes," replied his companion, "it is so; they will run nothing else, and you'll see they are in for a clipper!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Lord Portman, as some animal leaped on a stile, and poised itself for a moment on the broad top bar—"that's no deer!" However, on came the roaring rushing pack right for the stile, and the animal disappeared.

Suffice it to say, that a sharp fast thing ended in a pig-stye in a neighbouring village, when a long-legged lurcher-like sheep dog turned to bay, and left no doubt as to the correctness of Lord Portman's opinion.

"I must go home," said Mr. Farquharson; "it wont do; I can't face Pleydell after this."

One more anecdote I will give of old "Billy" Butler, and then say a few words as to my own knowledge of the beautiful county of Dorset.

He was dining one day with an old friend of mine, the late Sir John Wildbore Smith, at the Down House. I have shared in the hospitality of the Down House in very many happy hours, and knew it well. I regret to say that rumours, at the time when Butler dined there, were rife as to Sir John being no friend to the fox.

"Shall I help you to some pheasant," said Sir John to his guest, touching the breast of the roasted one before him.

"No, thank you," replied Butler, "I can't bite it; my teeth wont stand the shot."

The bird having been cut for some other guest, while that was going on, Butler observed that one leg was smashed up to the hock, and missing.

"Oh," exclaimed Butler, "I will have some, for I see now it has no shot in it."

"I assure you," replied Sir John, "my keeper always shoots my pheasants."

"It may be so, but this isn't shot; look at its leg, it's trapped. I tell you, Sir John, your keeper traps your pheasants as well as Mr. Farquharson's foxes."

On the day on which my friend, "Sir Edward Baker" came of age, the night following the day poured with rain, Mr. Austin saw Billy Butler in the hall divesting himself with difficulty from the pro-

fundities of a pair of monstrous leggings. "Why, Butler," the former exclaimed, "you must have found it hard work even to ride in those things."

"Not in the least," he replied; "no difficulty in the way I came. You go, said I to my man, and borrow Mrs. —— pillion. Put it on the black cart mare, and I'll ride behind you."

In these queer leggings, great coat and umbrella, old Butler arrived at Sir Edward Baker's.

Another Dorsetshire gentleman was shooting in one of the preserves in the country, who was notoriously a bad shot.

"I say, keeper," he called out, "look for the dead hares."

"Yes, sir," said the keeper, looking in vain for them. "Bang" went the gun again, and "There's another," exclaimed the shooter, "pick that one up too."

The host of the shooting day then coming up, "The gentleman says," cried the keeper to his master, "that he has killed several hares, but I can't find one, nor any fleck!" "No wonder," called out his master; "it's not a hare; he's been shooting at your legs." The man had on a pair of yellow leather leggings. "Well, then," said the keeper very coolly, "he arn't hurt I," and resumed the line of his beating.

When I first knew Dorsetshire, Farquharson hunted the country, and an immensely wide country it was. Lord Portman also kept a pack of fox-hounds, and my noble friend will, I am sure, good-naturedly ex-

cuse my repeating what some of the farmers in his country have told me. "When my lord is out," they said, "and we hear his hounds running our way, and a cover intervenes between the coming cry and us, the first thing that looms in sight round the corner of the wood is my Lord Portman, then out of the wood behind him comes the fox, then the hounds, and then Atkinson and the field."

Some time after I knew the country, Mr. Drax, of Charborough, received the Charborough country from Mr. Farquharson's hunt, in right of his wife, my cousin, who was a Miss Grosvenor Drax. He claimed it as the male representative of the family, and that only by marriage. He got back the country, which Farquharson had only held on sufferance, but unfortunately the latter retained one small willow bed, his own private property, and refusing to let Mr. Drax have it, continued to hunt it himself. On this, the other purchased a large estate, Holderness in Dorsetshire, in the midst of Mr. Farquharson's vale country, and in turn refused to permit him to draw his covers.

While the dispute between them was going on, I was called in to advise Mr. Drax in the matter, fully resolved in my own mind, if I saw the chance, to make up the quarrel. Farquharson took his stand upon the acknowledged impossibility of any interference with the marked limits of a fox-hunting country, and denied Mr. Drax's right to seize on a large portion of his vale. This would have been quite an unassailable position if Mr. Farquharson himself had not been the first to abrogate that long

respected principle by taking the willow bed. Both had transgressed rights that had always been respected by masters of hounds throughout the United Kingdom.

After these reprisals had taken place, and after Mr. Drax had built a kennel, and planted and made several elaborate fox covers, Mr. Farquharson expressed his willingness to restore his willow bed, provided he received in return permission to hunt over the Holderness Estate and covers.

This, however, in justice to Mr. Drax, I felt myself unable to sanction, because on account of the act of Mr. Farquharson in taking away his little cover, Mr. Drax had incurred a very heavy outlay in the purchase of this estate for hunting, and the little willow bed and a considerable estate were not a fair exchange. To moot the question, however, and to obtain peace, I proposed that Farquharson should give up to Mr. Drax a certain amount of country adjoining the Charborough country, in return for Mr. Drax's surrendering to him the Holderness property; but all that I could say or do would not induce Mr. Farquharson to resign anything but his willow bed, when, as that was not a fair equivalent, all negotiation fell to the ground, and matters continued as they were.

It was at Charborough Park where the match I made with my two horses, Beacon and Brock, and my deer greyhound Odin, against five bucks, was fixed to come off on the following terms:—

I was to use the two horses, and the single dog in taking five full-headed bucks, and no one was to

assist me in taking them. If in taking the deer one of them was to be accidentally killed, in that case I lost the match; or if the horse on which I rode to take the deer *did not lie down* on the ground the moment I dismounted, during the time that I was taking the deer from the dog, and securing or "hobbling" him, all of which time I was not to let loose my horse, in that case also I lost the match.

Under such circumstances, there were many chances against me. If any of the five bucks, when at bay, injured or incapacitated my dog, or if he killed any one of the deer, or if my horse, a very high-spirited one, did not, under all the excitement of the chase, lie down the minute I dismounted, any one of those contingencies lost me the match.

The chief fact on which my opponents relied was, as to the horse lying down; because, they said, no doubt a man might teach a horse to lie down when trained to do so, and at a given sign in cool moments of accustomed obedience; but that he would do so in the heat of an exciting chase, they said, was quite a different thing, particularly when close under his nose his rider, a dog and a deer, were struggling for the mastership.

People were so puzzled by the novelty of this engagement that they scarce knew, or seemed to know, if they thoroughly comprehended the pros and cons regarding its success or otherwise, and therefore there was little betting, but an immense amount of curiosity to see the match come off. To those of my friends who had any idea of backing me, I explained

that I was perfectly certain that the horse would do all that I required of him, and that it was not through him that I should fail. One of two things was more likely to cause defeat; either the dog would kill one of the deer, or one of the deer disable the dog, as the bucks had, of course, full heads, and were inclined to be vicious, the match having been appointed to take place after "the Rut." Of course, the time fixed for it to come off was assigned by me, at a period when I well knew that all old deer would generally be weaker than usual, and when at Charborough, from being very badly fed, they would come much more easily to hand than in any other park I had been used to; could I not have counted on such favourable circumstances, I should never have dreamed of making such a match.

The first blow to my chance of success was given by Mr. Drax, who, while intending to do me a service, blundered into the very thing of all others the most opposed to my interest, and the likeliest to defeat me. He found out in the terms of the match that though no one was to assist me in coursing and taking the deer, there was nothing to prevent him or his servants from singling out a buck from the herd, and so putting a deer at my service. It had been my well-considered intention not to have singled out a buck until I had made the whole herd of male deer leg-weary—that is, I should have kept them to their feet as long as possible, and then have taken to the first old buck that seemed inclined to leave his companions, and to go away to lie down. It was to this

end that I devoted the energies of my horse, Beacon, Brock being kept for the chase alone.

Considering that Mr. Drax had most liberally put his house and his park at my disposal, and that he had set his heart on giving me what *he supposed* was the valuable assistance of himself and his men, I did not like to thwart this well-intended, but to me most ruinous idea, so I preferred putting up with it to doing by my entertainer what he might conceive to be a disagreeable thing; but it influenced me in the arrangement of any wagers that I had on the event, and made me at once give my backers a caution to hedge their money. I was the more confirmed in this advice to them, inasmuch as I had discovered that instead of the deer in the park being left in their usual low and starved condition—indeed all deer in all parks on moderate or usual keep are weak at that particular season of the year—Mr. Drax, finding that they were to be seen by the public, again lost sight of my best chance, and, for his own sake or for appearances—on that particular season he fed his deer up like fighting-cocks, and put the entire herds of male deer, if lean, still in fine running condition, and in full command of all muscular, speedy, or fighting power.

The two chief chances in my favour, and on which I chiefly reckoned for success, were therefore cut from under me, and I got off every sixpence of the money I had betted. My own bets were of small amount, as I could not afford to risk the chance of losing any considerable sum, not being one of those who, without

a sixpence to pay if they lose, oblige other people who have money to risk it without a chance of success. I regret to say that there are many of these obligingly sportive gentlemen in the world whose means are not so enlarged as their measures.

This reminds me of a rebuke I heard my lamented friend, the late Duke of Manchester, give to Mr. Fletcher, who used, in his younger days, to be called, by the late Duchess of Gordon, "her handsome plough-boy." Jack Fletcher had not a sixpence in the world—certainly in his later days when I knew him in Bedfordshire—nevertheless, he was always a guest in and about Kimbolton Castle. Whenever my hounds met there, I used to go overnight to dine and sleep, and sometimes for a couple of days to join in a day's pheasant shooting, which was sure to be very good. We were talking after dinner of some event in which my opinion differed from Fletcher's, when, to back his opinion, he offered to bet me "a hundred to one."

"A hundred guineas to one!" exclaimed the Duke, in great wrath; "don't talk like an ass—you know you have not a dozen pence."

Fletcher was silent, and made no more such ridiculous offers.

But to return to the match with the deer.

The morning proved bracingly fine, when, having provided myself with some leather "hobbles," which, buckled round a deer's neck, and on to each hind foot, would draw the hinder feet well forward, where they might be tied in with the fore feet, I

also took with me two light but sufficiently long staple-shaped irons, with barbed points, to hold either horn to the ground. So far, then, I was well provided.

The rein of Brock's snaffle-bridle not being long enough to let him have sufficient liberty to lie down and roll, which I well knew he would take the opportunity of doing, and, as it would not do for me to run the risk of losing my hold of him, as that, too, would have lost me the match—I had a light but strong single thong attached to one of the rings of his bit, about seven feet in length, the end of it buckled firmly round my wrist, so that we could not part under any circumstances whatever. The hobbles and the irons I adjusted around me; and, with a straight handwhip to keep Odin in order, Beacon and Brock led behind me, I went forth from Charborough House, and found, to my surprise, about two thousand spectators in carriages, on horses, and on foot, drawn up on a commanding hill, where they could overlook the plains of the park, on which were gazing at the unusual conclave, a goodly herd of old male deer.

In those days the limbs and the inclination, the arms and the heart, kept pace together, and were willing to undertake anything; and an umpire being chosen, a Mr. Hussey was selected, and—to my great regret that he should so interfere—Mr. Drax accompanied me to single out a full-headed buck.

At that season there is a vast difference between

a buck of six years old who has not been master of the does to any great extent, and a seven, eight, nine, and ten-year old deer who has become completely used up; and there were a great many of these old deer cumbering Charborough Park. This number of very old bucks was caused by the ignorance of Mr. Drax and his men as regarded the deer; for in the buck season for venison, they judged the deer only by the size of their antlers, perhaps one of the most uncertain means by which they could arrive at the right deer to be killed.

Thus very old bucks who ought to have come in for venison two, three, four, and five years before, —through age or injury—their antlers having begun to decrease, they were regarded as younger bucks, and nothing but the six and seven-year old bucks were slain. The consequence was, that when I became acquainted with the deer, and from the frequency of my visits had time to make out what it was that puzzled me as to the male herd, I discovered that there were very many bucks and stags—for there was a fine head of red deer there also (strange it is that many men do not know the difference between a stag and a buck—even Sir Walter Scott in his novels confused them)—whose antlers had gone back from age so much that an ignoramus would have called them barebucks, sors, sorels, and prickets, whereas they were red and fallow male deer from nine to fourteen years old or more.

The very bucks, therefore, that I had made up my

mind to avoid—the lusty ones of six or seven years old—immediately became the marks of Mr. Drax's solicitude, and the instant one left the herd, the umpire called on me to pursue.

The first buck, a fine six-year-old black buck, in no way leg weary, and fed up to most unusual condition, soon singled himself out, and I ordered Odin to be let slip. Away they went at the speed of a greyhound with a hare, after a sharp course, ending at the side of the park, fenced in with invisible iron rails, grown up to by a fir-plantation, and where a number of newly and thickly-planted young trees were fenced in from the deer each by a protecting rail or "pouse." Odin, getting up to his deer in among the thickly-planted young trees, seized him slightly, not with a firm hold, by the head.

I was up and off my horse in a moment, and there was just a chance for me to run in had I been unfettered, and to have caught the buck by the hinder leg; but, fettered as I was in among the young trees and their fences, I dared not lose the short hold I kept on my horse, and free him to the length of the tether to my wrist, on account of the probability of our getting each on different sides of the obstacles, rendered more likely because, in their struggles, the dog or deer kept moving about.

It was but an instant that this part of the struggle lasted, when dog and deer came against one of the young trees, and the dog lost his hold. In the fall which the combatants alike got, and in the confusion

consequent on it, Odin for a moment caught the deer by the hinder leg, but remembering that he had been taught to think it a foul hold, he let go and made a spring at the ear. This he missed, and the buck at once turned to bay, lowering his broad antlers for the charge, and going in his turn at the dog, Odin retreating with his head to the horns, but springing beautifully from side to side, as the buck attempted to lunge; then, in thus giving way, not observing the invisible iron fence behind him, came full broadside against it, and the buck also seeing nothing but the dog, charged at the same time with full force, and sent his brow antler right into the dog's body, happily missing any immediately vital part. To my horror I saw a jet of blood follow the withdrawal of the horn, and a sanguinary stain appear at the same time in Odin's mouth, while the dear companion of many a sporting and happy hour sunk down on the grass exhausted.

Then the graceful and triumphant buck, with a proud toss of his head, galloped back and rejoined the herd. Alas! I saw that the fate of the day was against me, and that there was no chance of the disabled dog taking five deer, the more so that instead of keeping their eyes on the one out of whom something had been taken, Mr. Drax and his men were singling out a fresh one that had had nothing whatever to do. A bottle of cold water carried by my servant wonderfully refreshed the wounded dog, when in much too short a time, considering all things, a fine fresh buck stood forth, and Odin was slipped at his new and fresh adversary. Without any hope of success, I saw

my poor dear dog once more gallantly take up the running, lamed as I felt he was in one shoulder, but his speed and dash were gone. Instead of his going up to his deer with a rush so sudden that it gave no time to turn to bay, he could only just hold his own at the deer's haunches, the buck being quite as fast as he was. By a desperate effort, however, he got up to the deer's shoulder, and made a resolute attempt at the throat, but failing in his spring, and his hurt shoulder giving way, he made a blunder and rolled in front of the buck, who at the moment was slacking his speed with a view to fighting, and again a fresh and vigorous deer charged the disabled dog, and rolled him over several times, missing him by the greatest good luck with the brow antler.

The buck then stood at bay, and Odin baying him and making feints to get in; but so lame was he that the buck had him perfectly at will, without the dog's having a chance to win, so I called Odin off, and told the umpire that I was defeated.

It would not do, however, to let the amusement of so many spectators end there, for some had come from distant counties, and besides there was a very large attendance of the fair sex, and to be regarded by them as a beaten knight was in no way an agreeable reflection. With permission of Mr. Drax, I sent for a brace more of my deer greyhounds, and while they were gone for I took Brock up to several carriage doors, and gave him a hint to lie down at my pleasure. This duty he performed with right good

will, consoling himself always with an attempt to roll off his saddle, and then with such a squeak and series of rearings and boundings, when he got up again, as made the audience scream or laugh according to their sex's inclination.

On my brace of fresh dogs being brought, I then singled out and coursed, and took several full-headed bucks for the amusement of the spectators, Brock performing his portion of the duty by lying down while I was securing the deer, and at the same time never being let out of my hand. The presence of the second dog was a match for the unusually fine condition of the deer, and the dogs acting in concert the deer was always safely pulled down.

One more public occasion of sport in the splendid sporting county of Dorset, and then to other themes.

I had got some steady old foxhounds together, among them my well-known old Harrogate, then become too old for any more use in the kennel of the late Mr. Assheton Smith, to amuse myself with hunting the otters in the New Forest, or in any other locality where they could be found. Loath to be quite quit of the chase, persecution having taken from me the ability to keep hunters, I took to hunting on foot, with a spear in my hand instead of a whip, and much good fun I had. Out of nine otters found in the New Forest, and in the river running by the town of Wareham, and on Lord Malmsbury's "Moor's River," I had killed eight, so

I feared no breadth of stream and no difficulties of rock or bank, and therefore ventured to draw the Stour up for a considerable distance.

On Mr. Farquharson's being made aware of this, and that my draw would lead me near his hospitable mansion, on a given spot he fixed a tent, and invited a very large party of ladies and gentlemen to meet me. As ill luck would have it, the draw was a blank, and I came to the meadow where the tent was by the side of the river, just about the usual time of luncheon, and was bidden to the feast. Having swam the river several times in the course of the day, and waded at other times, of course my appearance was somewhat of a river god, carrying the blessings of ample showers to everybody I came near; so when it was suggested to me to take my seat at a crowded table, by the side of a very handsome and most agreeable lady, who I dare say will remember the occasion, I looked at her, wrung my sleeves, not my hands, to show their humid state, and declined risking an attack of rheumatism or cold upon a creature so graceful and so fair.

To aid me in this fix, and kindly to avert the loss of so much pleasure, however, she lent me a shawl, with which I thatched myself on the side next to her, sufficiently to keep all the cold water to myself, and in that state, and in the most agreeable society, very hungry and very dry *inside*, I made a most elaborate luncheon, for Mr. and Mrs. Farquharson, with their usual hospitality, had indeed placed before us every delicacy of the season.

Adieu then, as far as these volumes go, to the beautiful county of Dorset, in which my fortunes have now located me, in a quiet comfortable cottage, with a wide extent of manor, surrounded by rhododendrons so fine that they are as tall as the roof, and by adding my height to their topmost bough, I can look down my own chimney from my own shrub, a difficult thing for anybody else to do, and one which I have never previously achieved.

Dorset is a sporting and a hospitable county. Its fox-hunting, its harriers for roebuck and hare, its varieties of game for the gun, from the blackcock to all kinds of wild fowl, its pheasants, partridges, and hares, its coursing downs and its variety of fishings, from sea to river, lake, and brook, from its sea fish and salmon to its splendid trout and pike, all are first rate of their kind. If I add that its bowers are filled with beauty, and that beauty is enchanting, I am sure all will affirm that I but tell the truth were they only to remember the ball given in this winter of 1864-5 at Canford by Sir Ivor Guest. There was more loveliness in that spacious ball-room than ever I saw collected on a similar occasion at any other place, and beauty too, that I, for one, shall never forget.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRAVELLERS.

Seeing strange countries—Prosperity of England after the loss her American colonies—Changes in France—The library the Travellers' Club—Modern tourists—Missionaries—Boo makers—The Buckinghamshire dragoon and the ex-amba sador to Vienna—Suggestions for forming a great party- What some exalted personages sink to—Men of science—Tl great astronomer and the ex-viceroy—Recollections of Hol Lodge—Lord Mountnorris, Lord Brougham, and Sir Robe Wilson—Men of rank—A droll story—A defence of sma talk—Mountain-climbers and lion-killers—African discoverie

I HAVE qualified myself for election into a certai club, having exceeded the number of miles whic every aspirant for the honours of membership mu previously have journeyed. It is in my power, ther fore, to have enjoyed the privilege of associating wi a select circle of my own compatriots who had followe the example of Lord Bateman of the well-known balla in wandering far from the comfort and security dear old England, "Strange countries for to see."

Before even the publication of the truism e pressed by Shakspeare, that "Home keeping you have ever homely wits," every domestic ark in tl three kingdoms appeared to have been under a obligation to send forth its dove or its raven—as t case might be—over the great waters that surrou

the habitable world. At first they were content with short flights to the mainland, where, having found sufficient rest for the soles of their feet, they returned to astonish their friends with marvellous adventures and foreign fashions more or less true; but it was not long before they were ambitious of going much further afield, and took an honourable place among navigators and discoverers.

The disruption of the American colonies from the mother country, and the frantic gratification it caused our lively neighbours across the channel, I heard of, not very many years after they occurred, and I well remember the prophecies of England's ruin that her continental enemies were in the habit of uttering whenever her loss was referred to. I have lived to behold empire after empire created by the energy and bravery of her sons since the success of this rebellion, on the same continent that now stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific—one in Asia that has absorbed the fairest provinces of Hindostan, and one in Australia that promises in material prosperity to be greater than both; and I have lived to see the revenue of this doomed country rise from the thirty millions or so, with difficulty gathered in the year, to the seventy millions easily obtained in the same period without a tenth of the taxation.

Moreover, I have survived to behold the descendants of the people who could not endure a trifling duty on tea to assist the exchequer of a country whose language they spoke, and under whose laws they had flourished, become the most taxed nation on the face

of the earth, for no more patriotic object than that of destroying each other on the largest possible scale.

A few years only before my birth the bad neighbours who assisted in producing these troubles, and had rejoiced in the results, deluged their land with the blood of their noblest and fairest, crushing both Church and State under the sanguinary chariot-wheels of a Juggernaut they miscalled Liberty—when a mob of tyrants ruled in the palaces of the kings. This reign of terror inaugurated a republic, that republic an empire, the empire became a monarchy, another monarchy succeeded, then another republic, and lastly, a second, and I trust more firmly established and better governed empire than its predecessors.

In the course of my career these changes have followed each other, accompanied by more or less bloodshed; and the last act of this most sensational drama brought forward, as the eminent tragedian for that astounding performance, a person whom I had known for years in London society, content apparently with the very limited responsibility of a walking gentleman.

But my theme is travel, not politics. I here think it necessary to intimate that, notwithstanding my qualifications, I did not seek admission into the club to which I have referred, having had the advantage of the experience of one of my friends who had become a member in the usual way. I will endeavour to recall his account of his *entrée*. Should he, however, have exercised the traveller's privilege, I

hope no one of my readers will take exception to such a matter-of-course proceeding.

As soon as he had seated himself comfortably in the library, and discovered that there was no one there with whom he was intimate, he told me that he took up one of the narratives of Silk Buckingham, whom I also knew, to wile away the time. Though the author was at one period a celebrated tourist, the book did not amuse him, and his attention strayed. He thought of the enjoyment he had found on his first acquaintance with Captain Cook's Voyages; how deeply interested he had been while perusing the sufferings of Mungo Park, and how charmed with the adventures of Bruce. They had been travellers after the ideal of his youthful heart, who had thrown into the shade the explorations of those earlier heroes of adventure, Robinson Crusoe, of York, mariner, Peter Wilkins, the Cornish miner, and Sindbad, the Arabian sailor.

He remembered the explorers of the Pacific, of Africa, of Abyssinia, and asked himself whether he was about to find anything like the gratification their pages had afforded him in social intercourse with the many distinguished adventurers then to be met almost daily at "the Traveller's Rest" in Pall Mall, of which he was now an inmate.

The members of the club he knew were capable of being classed into several well-marked divisions. The most numerous were the tourists, persons possessed of considerable pretensions to rank or

wealth, and a good deal of leisure, who went the usual fashionable routes to Rome and to Jerusalem, to Constantinople, to Damascus, to Switzerland or to Spain, to the Mediterranean and to Greece, often in their own carriages and in their own yachts, and who generally published diaries of their adventures, made up of dilettante observations on ruins and picture-galleries. At this particular period, Murray was not an unfailing finger-post; still there existed plenty of sources from which information could be easily gained, and it was sure to re-appear in the said diaries with no original additions except disputes and grumblings with hotel-keepers and douaniers.

The next class were amateur or professional missionaries, who effected their pilgrimages much in the same spirit as they had been made by the piously-inclined from time immemorial, and exhausted quite as much enthusiasm on the ceremonies at Rome as their connoisseur countrymen expended on the sculpture, architecture, and painting, and, moreover, wrote more movingly on the memorable places in the Holy Land than their less religious compatriots scribbled about Vesuvius, Mont Blanc, or the Rhine.

Then there were the pioneers of that grand patron of Asiatic travel, "John Company," men generally possessed of scientific attainments, as well as of a remarkable spirit of adventure—travellers in the highest sense of the word. There were also other public officers—governors, naval and military officers, and diplomatic agents who had penetrated to distant parts of the globe, and had acquired knowledge of

various kinds to illustrate their natural and social history.

Lastly, there were the book-makers, who travelled from Dan to Beersheba, or wherever they thought there was attraction for the public—not to cry out that all was barren, but to make it clear that all was two volumes quarto. From the famous Sir John Carr to the more voluminous author whose verbose descriptions my friend was pretending to read, there had been a long list of such explorers. In truth, they had come not as single spies but in battalions.

He fully expected to make the personal acquaintance of some of the most remarkable of these travellers—preferring, of course, the genuine Christian, Lord Lindsay, to the apostate Jew, whose adventures in the East were then attracting the attention of the religiously fashionable community—Lieutenant Holman, who was only deficient in sight, to the mob of travelling sight-seers, who had made it apparent that they were equally deficient in brains—Sir John Ross, who had so well earned his geographical spurs, in preference to any of the carpet knights who had played at nautical explorations by sailing from the Solent to the Adriatic in their well-appointed yachts—Malcolm, who had studied for years the peoples of India, to any of the innumerable amateur authors who had published journals of their flying visits to Delhi or the Punjaub.

He was engaged in these reflections and anticipations when he noticed two gentlemen approaching, whose peculiar appearance made them easily recog-

nisable. The senior was unusually stout, with a large fat face closely shaved sinking into the folds of his cravat with a triple chin. He was of a tolerably ripe age, unquestionably, yet there was an eager vivacity in his glance that might have belonged to his grandson. He was recognised at once as a duke of recent origin, or rather as two, for he had been honoured with two ducal titles at the same creation, which extravagance had been justified by a wit of the time, as in accordance with the substantial claims of his Grace—in other words, he possessed sufficient raw material to make two dukes—and therefore two dukes he had been created. He will easily be recognised as the original of Theodore Hook's laughable squib, "The Buckinghamshire Dragoon." His companion was younger by a decade, and less corpulent by a good many stone. He was tolerably well made, of middle age, and of military bearing, possessing a face remarkable for a peculiar expression caused by an apparent drooping of the eyelids. Though he seemed somewhat out of temper, he was not ill-looking—in fact he had been a brilliant cavalry officer and a lady-killer—but having married an heiress, she had made him understand the necessity of economizing his amiability for home consumption. He held rank in the peerage only one step lower than his friend, and was the author of two or three tours.

The new member was aware that both had been travellers; the former had sailed in a yacht of his own across the Bay of Biscay, and along the coast of Portugal and Spain; had touched at the principal

ports in the Mediterranean; had visited the cities of Italy, and had traversed the most beautiful lakes and mountains of Switzerland. The latter had made many journeys—some memorable—had visited Spain, Germany, Turkey, and Greece. The two had come together to the "Travellers," therefore, to exchange travelling ideas. So thought my friend, as he saw them sit close together at a little distance from him. As he did not lift his eyes from his book, they considered him absorbed, and voted him absent.

Unfortunately, Mr. Silk Buckingham could take no firm hold of his attention. He tried to give himself up to Mesopotamia, but could not avoid being detained a good deal nearer home. It soon became clear to him that his neighbours had not entered the library to share their travelling experiences.

"Duke," said the younger, and evidently the more energetic of the two, "I am free to confess that I am dreadfully disappointed."

"So am I," replied the other, as he threw his heavy left leg over his right knee.

"But we used to be like brothers," added the Marquis. I give him his rank. "He always commenced his letters to me—'My dear Charles;' I always commenced mine to him — 'My dear Arthur.'"

"Very friendly, indeed."

"Then look at the employments I have held. Military commissioner with the armies of the allies, plenipotentiary at Chatillon, ambassador at Vienna. I really have a very strong claim."

"Unquestionably," added the Duke, now nursing his right leg.

"And my members, you know, Duke, have always voted with the Government, except in that cursed split which his Catholic Emancipation scheme created."

"Very true."

"But for years he has hardly taken notice of me —overlooked my claims on many important occasions —particularly when the colonelcy of the Blues became vacant. Even in the construction of the Peel ministry, all I could effect was to make an opening for my son. I could get nothing for myself. I had the mortification of seeing persons possessed of neither family connexions nor administrative experience placed in positions that ought to have been offered to me."

"I was similarly treated," remarked the double Duke, his fat features expressing dissatisfaction. "To be sure, they allowed me an opening for my cousin, as they did for your son, but I could not reconcile myself to being shelved after the immense trouble and cost I had been put to in keeping my people together."

"But you see, Duke, my brother gave him his command in the Peninsula, and supported him through all his early difficulties, when he had not another friend in the Cabinet. In short, was the making of him. Some sense of gratitude ought to influence his feelings favourably towards me."

My friend plunged again into Mesopotamia, and for a few minutes gave himself up to the ciceronship

of Mr. Silk Buckingham, in that ancient country; but somehow or other, as he declared, it proved awfully dull work.

"I have been thinking a good deal about it," observed the Marquis, looking complacently at his turquoise ring.

"About forming a third party?" inquired the Duke.

"About forming a third *great* party," was the emphatic reply. "Several rising young men have attached themselves to me—ambitious, with striking talents for public business. I dare say as many, equally reliable, have been in the habit of looking up to you for patronage."

"They are as plentiful as blackberries," said his portly friend, apparently not quite well pleased. "I think it rains clever young men. I have put forward scores of them in my time, and cannot say that I ever got anything by it. As soon as you have placed them in a way of being useful to you, they insist on only being useful to themselves."

"I am free to confess that there's not much gratitude in political connexions," replied the other, gloomily; "but you see, Duke, we cannot make up a great party without them."

"Humph! why can't the leading families combine as they used to do?" asked his Grace, impatiently shifting his heavy leg. "They have pinned their faith on Wellington, with a blind subservience that is quite astonishing. There is no getting them to move in any direction, except when he gives the word of command. I am quite ready to lead an attack

against the Whigs whenever they show an assailable front, but I would rather my supporters should have the dash and enterprise of young soldiers. Now, there is one of my friends whom I know to be possessed of rare talent, and he hates Peel for having systematically neglected him."

Again my friend made a header into Mesopotamia; with the honourable intention of not coming to the surface till the anxious politicians had taken themselves out of hearing, he manfully struck out into the depths of Silk Buckingham's turbid eloquence, and having touched a very muddy bottom, rose like a cork in the next page.

Much to his satisfaction, the senior of his communicative neighbours seemed to be realizing the fact that the chair he had selected could be safe only for one Duke at a time. His Grace, therefore, rose to prevent the transfer of his weight to the floor, while his most noble coadjutor was adjusting his turquoise pin in the mirror before him, and inspecting the effect of his well made clothes.

Presently they both left the Club, proceeding slowly towards St. James's Street. My friend was left to his own reflections, and they were immediately directed to the two persons who had just left him. In the one he saw a striking instance of the decay of that family influence which had so long directed the machinery of Government; in the other, a no less striking one of the helplessness which followed its withdrawal. It was the beginning of the end. In a few short years the former, who had aimed at

creating a Cabinet, was content with the very subordinate post of Lord Steward of the Household, and the dignity of the equally ambitious Marquis dwindled into the next-to-nothingness of "Gold Stick."

Left to the exclusive enjoyment of the quietude of the library, the new member's eyes having wandered from the books to the busts, and from the busts to the portraits of the heroes of maritime and terrestrial discovery and adventure it contained, he began to think over the advantages likely to accrue to him through his membership of the domestic institution into which he had been admitted. He had cultivated a taste for geography that only Von Ritter could have satisfied, and there were other branches of natural history for which he entertained much affection, though based only on a slight acquaintance.

An active public life, much of which had been passed in foreign cities, fulfilling very onerous duties, had not been favourable to the development of a naturalist, and, excepting some advances in geology, he had made but small progress in either of the cognate sciences; but among the travellers he fully expected to meet astronomers, meteorologists, geographers, botanists, entomologists, conchologists—in short, oracles on all the ologies, and promised himself special improvement from constant association with them.

Unfortunately for his aspirations for self-improvement at this time, there was no Sir Roderick Murchison of easy belief, with a mansion in Belgrave Square too small to contain his innumerable geogra-

phical friends; no Sir Charles Lyell ready to enlighten any number of geological tyros who could not quite understand the ever varying explanations of the earth's changes that always seemed to want explaining; no Professor Owen, with a museum at his back, and all the encyclopædias in his head, choleric, but ready to describe minutely to the student in palæontology any monster of the pre-historic world, that had no sort of connexion with the present, of which he may have become possessed of a molar or a toe-joint. To be sure, all these amiable and gifted men were living, but they were not the authorities in science they have become.

There were, however, others accessible, who, if not so infallible, were well worth consulting. He might possibly get valuable geological information out of Dean Buckland; and if the peerage did not then boast of such accomplished naturalists as Lords Enniskillen and Egerton, there was "the travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen," and Byron's friend, and my own dear friend Hobhouse, and Ouseley, and others much too numerous to mention, who had gone east, west, north, or south, and had returned home to be the Marco Polos or the Mendez Pintos of admiring friends.

He was speculating in this way, when he was agreeably surprised by the entrance of the very man of all others he had most wished to see, or rather to hear—a naturalist of the very highest order—a philosopher and mathematician without a rival in his sublime pursuits. He was accompanied by a returned Viceroy of our Indian Empire, whose oriental attainments, however

had been checked in their development by a hasty recal. Both were evidently in excellent spirits, for they flung themselves into the vacated chairs as they concluded a hearty laugh. Observing that they were not alone, and apparently not wishing to disturb the stranger's studies—(of course he appeared absorbed in his book,—they at once became serious, and began to converse in an undertone.

Now I am well aware of the sanctity of private conversation, but the reader will indulgently consider my friend's many excuses for not respecting it as he ought to have done. His hearing was singularly acute, and his author terribly uninteresting. He did not care for Mesopotamia in the least, and was feverishly eager to hear the last discovery in astronomy from the lips of the greatest of living astronomers. Moreover, when he saw the astronomer's companion take off his hat and draw his hand through his fine head of hair, he could not avoid feeling curious as to the revelations of Indian policy that clever-looking head concealed—perhaps he may have been anxious to hear his real opinion of the gates of Somnauth.

It was not his good fortune to be so indulged. The conversation of his distinguished neighbours continued to be very lively, but was not at all either scientific or political. It was simply social small talk, such as any two ordinary diners-out might recreate their leisure with, in reference to their associates of the preceding day.

Now a fête at Holly Lodge may have been pleasant

enough, but surely there was no occasion, my friend thought, for him to have become a member of "the Travellers," to hear of it. He could not, for the life of him, understand why an ex-viceroy could condescend to be amused with such a mere cockney gathering, who had gloried in the magnificence of a full Durbar in the City of Palaces. Nevertheless, his lordship was uncommonly jocose on the subject, and laughed quite as freely as he joked. So much so, indeed, that the new member sometimes found it difficult to look as if he were doing justice to Silk Buckingham's prodigious erudition.

With respect to his companion, he seemed to take so much pleasure in these facetious reminiscences that my friend would have felt considerably indebted to anyone who would have reminded him that, Highgate, whatever might be its elevation, was not exactly the planetary hemisphere. Could such an observer, he more than once asked himself, turn from the sublime revelations of his telescope to find interest in the nothings of such a congregation of mites as had been assembled to do honour to the rich wife of the hereditary falconer. The Duchess may have been a body of some magnitude in her own sphere, but she was far from luminous; she may have exerted considerable influence in her own orbit, but my friend was quite convinced that this did not sensibly affect the earth, or any portion of the heavens within the solar system.

Still they laughed and still they joked about sayings and doings that were only fit to make para-

graphs in the "John Bull" or the "Age." He felt that he might just as well be devoting himself to Mesopotamia for any profit he was likely to get out of such discourse, and impatiently kept inwardly suggesting to the pleasant ex-Governor-General of India, "But what about the Ameers of Scinde?" and to the distinguished astronomer, "But what about the nebula in Vulpes and the Magellanic clouds?"

At this moment his attention was diverted from his tantalizing neighbours by the entrance of three gentlemen, who quickly disposed themselves in a group on the other side of his chair. Although the new member was apparently miraculously constant to Silk Buckingham, he contrived to identify the last comers, and all his geographical enthusiasm was excited when he observed the face and the figure of the senior of the three. They belonged to an Irish peer who, more than a quarter of a century before, had acquired a wide-spread reputation by his extensive travels in Africa. Fortunate as was his lordship in having penetrated countries far beyond the ambition of ordinary tourists, he was still more so in his engagement of a secretary whose pen and pencil made the narrative of his travels in these distant regions singularly attractive, and on the fame thus acquired he contrived to flourish throughout a tolerably long life.

One of his companions my friend as readily recognised as a forensic star of the first magnitude, a Whig leader possessed of great popularity, and of scientific acquirements of a high order. No one

could mistake that marked physiognomy any more than they could mistake that of Socrates or of Voltaire, for if the caricaturists had not made it sufficiently familiar, the owner had. He was remembered as the powerful champion of that doubtful specimen of an injured princess, Caroline of Brunswick, the great oratorical opponent of Peel in Parliamentary Reform, and the director of a grand scheme for popularizing science by the publication of sixpenny treatises which required a philosopher to understand. But though somewhat Quixotic, the new member knew that his attainments were far in advance of certain of his political associates who were then on the high road to distinction and influence, and respected him accordingly.

The other was a general officer who had served with credit in various parts of the world, but when employed on a confidential mission of the greatest possible consequence to England and to Europe, and fulfilling its duties most satisfactorily, had been superseded by the son of a Cabinet Minister, who had no other claim to such a post than the influence of his respected parent. This injustice had made him somewhat antagonistic in his ideas of the ruling powers.

The liberality of these ideas was displayed, while in Paris, after the return of the Bourbons, by assisting in the escape of a political prisoner, and, still more imprudently, when in London after the death of Queen Caroline, by aiding the mob in an attempt to defeat the endeavours of the police to maintain the

route the Government had directed to be taken by the funeral procession through the metropolis. For this the General had been dismissed the service; nevertheless he was popular, and being a man of talent and energy, evidently did not despair of recovering his position.

The latter stood by their companion, looking over him with a lively interest, while he, having accommodated himself with a seat, was loquaciously entering upon some subject apparently as interesting to himself as to them; my friend therefore could not help anticipating some important revelation. Perhaps the mystery respecting the sources of the Nile, which had baffled the penetration of so many explorers, might, he thought, be in course of solution. Perhaps he should hear authentic accounts of some of those outlandish marvels, whose existence had been vouched for by certain ancient naturalists and historians. Perhaps the noble traveller had come upon traces of the Queen of Sheba, or of the more fascinating Cleopatra, and was intent on entertaining his friends with choicest scandal of the courts of Solomon the Wise, or of Sardanapalus the Extravagant.

My friend's hearing was, as I have said, very acute, and he did not entertain the slightest fear of having to pay the proverbial penalty of listeners; but, well-disposed as he was to profit by the occasion, he was prevented from hearing a word of what was said, by the loud talk of his neighbours on his left. What were to him at that intensely-critical moment the platitudes of a fat woman of more than doubtful ante-

cedents that were being repeated in his hearing with such boisterous glee? Or did he care a straw about "the good things" that had been said about her by Rogers and Luttrell, and were repeated with quite a schoolboy's enjoyment of mischief by the facetious ex-viceroy? He felt it hard, too, that he could neither be permitted to profit by the vicinity of the undoubted author of a certain modest volume of "Observations at the Cape," nor by that of the reputed author of those magnificent voyages and travels in Abyssinia and Egypt that, as he could see, had a much more conspicuous place in the library around him.

To increase his dissatisfaction, several other literary and scientific personages entered, and immediately seemed attracted to the little group on his right. That something important was going on, and that the venerable earl was the source of the interest every face in the circle exhibited, was plain to my friend as it was tantalizing. One by one, the most distinguished of "the Travellers" came into the room, exchanged recognitions with the astronomer and the ex-Governor-General, and then strolled towards the fast-increasing throng that seemed such deeply-interested listeners.

To the study of ancient geography as well as of ancient history, the new member had given a fair share of his attention; but at that moment he would have cared little to have obtained information direct from Strabo or Thucydides; and as for the modern account of Mesopotamia he had taken in hand, his

feelings regarding it realized that hope expressed by Slender as to his affection for Anne Page—"If there be no great love in the beginning, yet Heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance."

Yet, as he observed certain of his fellow "Travellers," whom he regarded with peculiar interest, swelling the audience of the Irish Earl till the sluggish student and the eager gossips seemed equally overlooked, he grew more and more desirous of terminating his very slight connexion with ancient history and geography under his author's auspices. There must be something in his lordship's communication, he felt assured, of more than ordinary importance, to draw around him so many men of marked ability, who seemed to be deriving from it the greatest possible gratification.

Prominent among the latter, he observed the eldest of the King's sons, whose recent book of travels in the East had impressed the reading world very favourably in his behalf. He knew him now as an ardent Oriental scholar, as well as a peer of the realm, making his way gallantly along the road of popular favour. Could he have looked forward a little, he would have seen a lamentable termination of rather a brilliant promise.

Another of the much observed of all the observers was a lieutenant in the Indian army whose animated "Travels in Bokhara" had become as much the public talk, as had been his important services to secure our too rapidly growing empire in the East. That he would rise to well-merited eminence the new

member could not entertain a doubt, but little did he anticipate the tragic fate that in a few years was to end so bright a career. He was at this time one of the lions of the London season, and honours were being heaped upon him from all quarters. Town talk made much of him, and clubs made more. The learned societies were anxious to secure him amongst their fellows, and he was voted into "The Travellers," by acclamation.

My friend had largely shared in the impatience of our public men of the approaches of Russia towards our Indian Empire, and longed to compare notes with the young and enterprising officer respecting Lahore, Affghanistan, the far-off city of Herat, and the cat's paw of the Czar, Persia, by whom it was menaced; but any such conference he soon saw was out of the question.

How marvellous seem the changes that have occurred in the quarter of the globe to which then we were all looking with such intense interest. "The Lion of Lahore" and his kingdom have passed away; his priceless jewel, one of the wonders of the East, flashes its mountain of light from the diadem of our own Queen; his widow a short time since died in an obscure lodging, in the neighbourhood of London; Affghanistan has been imprudently won and disastrously lost; Herat has been conquered and reconquered; Dost Mahomed has followed Runjeet Singh to the tomb; neither Persian nor Russian need be feared in India; and—greatest marvel of all—"John Company" has become a tradition.

The small-talk of Holly Lodge suddenly ceased, not at all to my friend's regret, and looking up from his Mesopotamian narrative, he observed the astronomer and the ex-Governor-General join the throng on the other side of his chair with evident curiosity, and were soon lost to view. The new member was now left to the uninterrupted exercise of his listening faculties, but notwithstanding all his attention, he could hear nothing. A human voice was certainly audible, but not a sentence it uttered was distinct.

He was about surrendering his insecure hold upon Mr. Silk Buckingham, when a laugh broke simultaneously from the throng near him, and the circle gave evidence of a break-up. As he sprung on his legs he was hailed familiarly by an old friend, then holding a high post in the Government, who seemed in the greatest possible good humour.

"That's the drollest story, Mountnorris has just finished, I have heard a long time," exclaimed the statesman.

"Droll," repeated the new member, looking a little mystified. "Oh, ah! an adventure among some of the negro tribes, perhaps."

"Nothing of the sort," was the reply. "His lordship knows better than to repeat such things here—bringing coals to Newcastle, you know. It was a sort of Irish fairy tale, very funny, about an Irishman paying a visit to the man in the moon on the back of an eagle. A capital story; you ought to have heard it."

He went his way laughing, and in a very few

minutes my friend also went *his* way, but in a much more serious frame of mind. A pleasant illusion had been destroyed. He could not readily reconcile himself to such mere talk, when he had expected to be so prodigiously enlightened.

In this I think he was wrong. I do not see why great men who have seen the world, should not be permitted to associate with each other on an easy and familiar footing. The mathematician is not expected to talk problems—a judge who should be always summing up would not be tolerated anywhere—the traveller, therefore, at his club, ought to be allowed to be as social and amusable as the less adventurous portion of the community.

But a great change has been effected in the club since my friend's election. The race of amateur tourists has certainly greatly increased, but their multiplicity has made it necessary that they should do something more than journey from place to place, to obtain any distinction as travellers. Murray supplies them with information for any and every tour, but a man now who desires consideration for his foreign experience must go where the little red book cannot guide him, and must be furnished with intellectual resources far above the average in scientific knowledge which the preceding generation ever thought of. Above all, he ought to be familiar with the more important branches of natural history. As contributions to this interesting department of science, the narratives of the mountain-climbers and the lion-killers have a special value rarely to be found in

the works of the more pretentious geographer or ethnologist. That is, they would have, if they were always true.

Indeed, I think we have been overdosed with African travel. Notwithstanding all that has been written by Dr. Barth, by Captains Burton and Speke, by Dr. Livingstone, and by scores of other explorers, the unsophisticated native African remains among the most brutalised of human beings. It is impossible to invest him with the false interest which M. du Chaillu contrived, for a time, to fling over his first cousin, the Gorilla.

I never was ambitious of admission into the Travellers' Club; the books I have tried to read have deterred me from seeking a nearer acquaintance with their authors. Let me venture to hope that the source of the Nile may be left alone for a season; the ocean of ink it has directed into the circulating libraries ought surely to give it the name of the other great river belonging to the same quarter of the world. This is not the only evil; the monstrous black dose is made more nauseous by the wearisome elaboration of the mixture.

The great stumbling-block to the elucidation of truth is, that the instant a man returns to this country who has been in Africa, or any other distant land, my excellent friend Sir Roderick Murchison, and the mob of pretended geographers who follow him, on hearing that the returned traveller boasts of having discovered wonders, at once take him by the hand, call a public meeting, and without thinking, as the police think

of a tale when it is told to them, whether or not the accounts laid before them "will wash," they accept them, publicly speak of his statements as gospel, and then when some test comes which proves that all is "*not* gold that glitters," my excellent friend and his brother philosophers find that, having swallowed too much, it is wiser to digest it—if they can.

CHAPTER XIV.

VIVE LA CHASSE.

French ideas of sport—Kennels in France—The maimed hound—A day in the French forest—Discordant hunting-horns—French shooting and hunting—Hounds in chase—A rencontre—Wild boar and sow—Noisy sport—An old blind wolf that devoured little girls—The Limier—Cunning of the wild boar and the sow—Hunting an old solitaire—English hound ripped by a boar—Rejoicing of French sportsmen at his death—Dressing the wounded hound.

PERHAPS there is no country in the universe that has reached so high a point of civilisation as France. As she has now an Emperor, certainly, in my belief, the only ruler capable of keeping her excitable masses in order—for their own good; yet with the Frenchman's love of excitement, I wonder that he does not arrive at greater proficiency in cultivating "le sport" than I found in France when I went to the "Château Sauvages."

In pursuing the sports of the field their customs are ridiculous; nevertheless their passion for the cry of hounds, and the splendour of their woodlands, is beyond belief.

Frenchmen think that a hound is equally ready for work with his belly full or empty, when lame or sound; so at night, after a hard day's hunting, the dogs are

suddenly turned off their beds, and brought out in couples into the court-yard, and shown the head, antlers, and garbal of a stag. The lot of hounds are then shaken up in couples altogether till they are half strangled, and ready to tear each other, and, amidst the fanfare of huge horns and the excited cries of the Frenchmen, they are encouraged to worry the head of the stag, and to eat it if they can.

I am astonished that the Emperor permits such an absurd, and, as far as hounds are concerned, ruinous proceeding, for his Imperial Majesty lived long in England, where the chase is thoroughly understood, and therefore he must be well aware that no such thing is permitted there.

In what may be called the provinces of the French hunting country, I saw not only the kennel management, but also the same in the forests and fields. Brought up, as I had been, among the best hunting establishments, and having had them of my own, I really, at first, did not know whether to laugh or cry. I could not very well display the sense of mirth I experienced, being a guest, and having come a long way to hunt the wild game; and to cry at the miserable state of things I saw in the kennel would have been equally rude to my hospitable and kind entertainers. Let an English huntsman imagine a kennel kept in a most filthy state, and in it about seven couple of hounds labouring under all bodily infirmities of skin and limb, shape and make neglected, and yet each animal regarded as the best example of its kind, supposed to possess stoutness, speed, nose, and intelligence, able and willing to hunt

and run, though deficient in every quality which would enable him to do his work properly.

One of them in the first kennel I inspected had been caught and half killed by a boar at bay, and there was really no part of his frame that could be pronounced sound, but his head and fore-legs. Being willing to do his utmost, when put to draw a cover, all he did was to drag his hinder legs along, like a rabbit shot through the back, and roar and yell at every little bramble that hung him up. His owner would bring this miserable thing out, regarding him as his most reliable hound. As he never went into cover without getting suspended in a bush, and therefore yelling with pain and anger, the moment his yells were heard, the French *sportsmen* used to cock their guns and play an opera on their huge horns, to announce to all hearers that the hounds were running merrily at a *wolf or wild boar!*

In many a day of lovely autumnal weather I have ridden beneath the soft skies of Southern France, in the vicinity of "Premery" and "Nevere," and shared the chase in those mighty woodlands of copse. There are no large trees that embrace the little cultivated valleys.

One day is impressed particularly on my remembrance, from an assertion having been made by the "Blouses," that they had harboured a wild boar, in consequence of which I went to take up a position in a likely place for a shot.

It was a warm but rather gloomy day; the falling leaf could be heard as it trickled down among its fellows, of which there were enough laid upon the

ground for me to have heard even the light pattering step of hare or rabbit within forty yards. Having tied my splendid old white horse to a tree, at some distance from me, I took my stand at a place where the underwood was less thick, and where I could see down into the forest sufficiently to shoot at any large animal, such as boar, wolf, or roe-deer that might approach, and then listened attentively.

All, for a time, remained in that hushed repose so peculiar to large woodlands in an almost airless day, and as birds were out of song, there was really nothing to hear of any kind, save the falling leaves. All at once there arose such a din in the direction of the open fields adjoining the woods as made the welkin ring again, and created in me no small amount of wonder, for I had absolutely forgotten the French huntsman and his six couples and a half of hounds, who had gone round to the verge of the forest.

Keeping a sharp look-out around me, in case the insane yells below should start the animal without his being found, I listened to what an Englishman would call the turn of the hounds; but, extraordinary to say, there seemed to be no turn at all, no checks, or cessation of the full cry, and consequently no hits by separate hounds. Moreover, the cry seemed to make no progress, or very little, one way or other. Could they have found a wounded boar, and was he put up at once to bay, I thought, or what was the meaning of it? The horns were playing triumphant tunes according to the ideas of the different blowers as to what the game on foot was, or the way in which the hounds were running it. One huge curled-up

wind instrument was blatant of a wolf, another proclaimed a flying boar, others puffed of roe-deer, while those of less inflated notions and notes grunted the presence of a hare. In short, it was a funny opera, without a solo, no instrument having for a moment solitary sway, while the continuous yet anything but running accompaniment of hounds went on in everything but progression. Down as I was on the French errors of the chase, and up as I had begun to be to the knowledge of the sagacious canines (I really scarce can dignify them with the name of hounds), this extraordinary cry and fanfare for a moment or two astonished me, and I began to long for the advent of the rioters, driving, of course, before them some huge monster.

For a long time the cry was nearly stationary, and I could imagine my kind friends and their guests rushing about, and wild with eagerness, as quick and as eager as only a Frenchman can be, their eyeballs starting, their mouths open, their guns cocked, and looking at everything they ought not to look at, with the trigger ready to be pulled at anything that moved within the thickets.

If once a Frenchman imagines that the game is on foot of which he is in quest, every living thing that approaches him, concealed or slightly concealed by cover, that seems to come from the cry of the hounds, is instantly dubbed a wolf or boar, and placed under, luckily, rather a random fire.

The eldest son of my friend D'Anchald was hunting thus in the woods one day, when, well knowing the quarter of the forest he was in, he cut

across an angle or corner of the wood, from ride to ride. At that particular point there stood a Frenchman in the excited state I have described, who, on hearing Jules come rushing on through the copsewood, immediately fired his first barrel at him, and then the second; but such was the screen afforded by the cover, and so wide the aim, that the large duck-shot and a bullet or two only cut off the twigs and boughs in his vicinity, without doing him any harm.

"Hey! hey!—what did you shoot at?" roared Jules, but in his native tongue.

His unwitting assailant, on hearing only the first part of the exclamation, thought he had shot the heir of the house, and sunk down in the ride in a fainting fit.

On the day to which I refer, after waiting a considerable time, with the cry of the hounds, as it seemed to me, tied to a particular quarter, at last it approached. On, on it came, certainly on and on, but most unaccountably slow, so I waited, prepared for anything. The hounds then came almost into sight; my eye and ear told me that if there was any kind of hunted animal, it could only be close to the leading tongue, for in two or three yards more the whole hunt must run into the vista of the copse I had selected.

As I stood well behind a tree, and screened by some brambles, the first hound that crawled yelling and roaring into view was the poor old cripple previously alluded to. So slow was the pace of this, to his owner, redoubtable leader of the chase, that all

the rest of the hounds, save three fine able young English fox-hound bitches who were otherwise employed, walked around and about him, all more or less flinging their tongues, and having plenty of time at their disposal. Between whiles, they sat down to scratch their diseased hides, or to have a roll on their backs, whither the fleas had crept to escape their (from want of exercise during the entire summer) lengthened toe-nails. In short, such a burlesque upon the noble sylvan sport I certainly never saw. I was also curious to see the conduct of the three hounds of English breed. Attracted by the false cry, they kept circling round about and ahead of the noise, and making perpetual "casts" to pick up the expected scent, and then, having made every inch of the ground good, they would come flashing up to, and smell the very nose and jaws of the blatant curs, as much as to say, "What the devil are you doing?"

As, to my certain knowledge, for the space of two hours and a half, no beast of chase had passed that way, I suddenly broke in on the insane noise with an English "rate," which, from its tone and method, though to them in an unknown tongue, was very easily comprehended. The noisy old cripple hailed it as the note of rest, and immediately laid down to lick himself and scratch, while the rest of his coadjutors obligingly did the same, without any further effort to discover, or to speak to, or cast for the imaginary line they had been pretending to follow.

For about five minutes, I continued leaning my shoulder against the tree, laughing at this episode in

a French hunting-day, and wondering what my friends with their guns cocked, and in the most intense excitement, in the niches and nooks of the wood, were thinking of—whether the boar was killed, or had killed all their hounds, or what extraordinary event had happened to silence the music, which, without my interposition, might have lasted throughout the entire day.

Tired of laughing, and still resolved on further experiment, I made a sign and the sort of noise I thought would be understood by the pack as permission to proceed, when up got the old cripple at once in outrageous yells, and was backed by all in full cry. The three English fox-hounds absolutely smiled up in my face, as if in contemptuous silence, and remained with me while the rest roared on.

As my pace on foot through the cover was much faster than theirs, I reached the ride and my horse before they came into it, and again stood still to see what else they would be at, as they turned to me and were coming down the ride in full cry. I was standing in a wet place, over which I could have tracked even a rat if he had gone there in the last twenty-four hours, so before the hounds reached me I narrowly examined the entire breadth of the cart-way, and ascertained that nothing alive had been there for days ; nevertheless the pack came roaring on, yelled round my legs, and then taking up the heel-way of my horse, they even freshened in their clamour, and toddled on along the middle of the ride, while I, being mounted, walked my horse

leisurely behind. The cover ride led to another which cut across it, when as the pack went to the spot, I saw round the corners of the wood the staring and excited visages of several of my friends, their guns nearly at their shoulders and quite ready for an explosion. The hounds reached them in the fullest cry, and then without a word of reproach from them, seemed glad of the meeting, hoping that having given their masters a good day, and plenty of amusement, they would be taken home.

"What! what is it?"

"Where is he gone?"

"The boar or the wolf?"

"Have you seen him?" were the questions asked me in French and broken English by my excited friends. "Seen?" I replied—"gone? There's no beast of chase on foot; the hounds have been running nothing, save in the last two or three hundred yards, when they took up the heelway of my horse, till they found you, and deemed that you, like myself, had also found them out. Look at them, if they had a line of any sort up to you, why do they relinquish it, and make not a single effort to carry it one foot further than your legs? You saw the three young English foxhounds; they would not join in their lies, so they followed my horse."

"Oh, no," replied one of my friends, who spoke English very well. "Zare is ze boar, or zare is ze wolf, for it was dat splendid old dog" (the cripple, I forget his name) "who was leading zem, and he is always right."

"But I tell you the ride is wet, and I have slotted every inch of it," I exclaimed, almost losing my temper, "and I will swear not a thing as large as a rat has been on or over it for days; besides, I tell you, to look at the fact, the English hounds will have nothing to do with it."

"Oh, zay have not de nose; zay do not know; something has gone there long ago," replied my friend.

But as the something that had gone there long ago must have expired at the spot we stood on, for it went no further, the chase was up for the time, and though my friends persisted in what they called their "Chasse," I returned to the château to keep my horse fresh for a more promising day.

It is very strange, but Frenchmen regard their hounds particularly, and their horses too, as machines that cannot be tired, and if the Frenchman wishes to hunt, he hunts whether the hounds like it or not. Thus, also, the Frenchman goes out in the morning, never punctual to his time, resolved to amuse himself till it is time to go home to dinner, taking good care to have a large flask of cherry brandy in his breast pocket, and a sandwich in another.

As long as the day lasts he will be out. He has nothing to do at home, he can stand any amount of fatigue, and from the crafty but false babble of his hounds he never thinks that he has had a blank day, whether he sees an animal or not, for he believes in their cry. While they are at their leisure walk after each other, scratching and babbling, the French-

man roves the rides of the forest, and contents himself in its nooks in a state of frenzied delight, expecting at any moment to run against a wild boar.

If by chance a boar, disturbed by the noise of the hounds, shifts his quarters and gets wounded, so as to bring his pace to the level of his slack pursuers, and they get on his line, the moment he begins to run short and to set himself up for an occasional "bay," just when a signal on the huge horn would be worth anything, to telegraph a change of quarter, for the quarters of the woods are immensely large, then the instrument becomes, from its size and weight around the shoulders, cumbrous, and its proprietor throws it away.

I have had my horses shy at these cast-off hunting horns, and jump over them in the rides, their owners having tied their horses to trees, and gone running about the copse on foot.

I am also thoroughly convinced that if the hounds chanced to come suddenly on a boar or sow, they are more afraid of the latter, because while the "vieux solitaire" charges only to clear himself a passage through his assailants, the sow will run at, and even run after the hounds. If she does get hold of one, she will stay, and worry him as a dog will do to a cat.

During the run, the game was always more than a mile before the pursuers, to come up to boar or wolf being the last thing they wished. I had an opportunity of seeing that the Frenchmen, when they rode on as

they thought well ahead, had not the remotest idea of pace, for though they dismounted in rides and passes, and with ready guns in their hands stared into the forest in the direction of the coming cry and in expectation of a shot, the boar was invariably further behind them as they faced the pack than the pack was in their front. They never re-mounted to go on again till the hounds, roaring, walked into the rides and had a comfortable roll and scratch, as the case required.

On one occasion, when we had joint packs out, of all sizes and sorts, from the turnspit beagle up to the very fine rough-coated splendid-looking blood-hound from "Vendée," of whom, with great care and proper usage, I have a very high opinion, I and the three young, willing, and able English fox-hounds used to be a mile ahead of the French pack and the pack's people, and up with the boar, though I never saw nor got a shot at him or her, whichever it was. I could hear the fox-hounds at bay, though they were not strong enough to hold the boar to bay till I should succeed in getting up to them. The moment the boar or sow heard me coming, the bay was broken, and the run went on again.

Indeed, it was almost heartbreaking to me, to hear my settled notes on my straight horn—for I had told them what I should mean by one, two, three, four, or five blasts—overpowered by a long "tailing" roar, each man in the distance, and in a descending scale, blowing his own tune to his own hounds, and every hound at the head of each tail, so to speak, roaring an accompaniment, and the middle of the tail and the furthest end of

it yelling a chorus of more than a mile in length, the row behind me causing my English hounds to stop and listen, under the impression that their animal had doubled behind them, and was being run into, while they were thus accidentally away.

It is incomprehensible to me that men possessed of such endurance and energy, and love of the chase, as Frenchman are, and who are quite sensible and observant enough of things in general, should not arrange their hunting establishments better. As to teaching them, that is impossible, for they wont be taught—their answer to a suggestion to do a thing in a better way is invariably, "Oh, no, we never do," and never having done it, they wont do it; so advice is useless.

In the neighbourhood of Nevere and Premery the horses were very good, the cattle excellent, the tame pigs as flat as pancakes, and as long on the legs as greyhounds—nothing long or large about them but their heads and ears—and the sheep similarly lengthy on the leg, and in carcase tucked up, and little else than wool, and that of a very middling quality. The wolves were magnificent beasts of their kind, and in much greater quantities than the natives deemed them to be, while the wild boar was as beautiful a picture of the natural pig indigenous to the forest in shape and make, as I ever saw tame and improved in a farm-yard. Short on the leg, long in the back, the back and sides shaped like a beam, and "bream," the loins broad enough for a man to lie upon, while the hams were round and full. Very little "pig's cheek," for the

heads were small, the ears pointed, and laid back, and shaped something like those of a thorough-bred horse. The pace they could go, when they chose to "get their heads out of cover"—the French saying is, that a "boar always runs with his head under cover" —was astonishing. I saw enough of the wild boars in their native woods to know that that famous artist, Schneider, had never seen them other than on his canvas, for a wild boar never had a curly tail, and never curls his tail; he holds it straight out like a painting brush, unless when his back is against a tree, and then he sticks it down between his hams.

Among my many and agreeable adventures in the French forests, there is an occurrence noted down as of a peculiar and pathetic character in regard to an old wolf, who towards the end of his predatory career ceased to confine his attentions to flocks and herds, and turned them to little girls. This old wolf had been known for years in the forests, royal and private, around the "Château Sauvages," the residence of Monsieur D'Anchald, who had frequently chased him without success; so often, indeed, that the blouses had begun to invest the old depredator with preternatural powers. On one of these occasions, while the wolf was hunted by hounds, D'Anchald viewed him run into the midst of a flock of sheep; but though he kept his eye on the gregarious throng of lean and very long-legged muttons, he never could see the felon leave them. Sportsmen and hounds then surrounded the flock, and scattering them in all directions, in the expectation of finding the wolf, discovered their mistake, and again

the blouses were brought to the conclusion that the wolf and the Devil were in concert, and the ignorant minds of all—I only apply this to French gentlemen strictly as regards sport—were confirmed in the idea of Satanic league, from the hounds being totally unable to hit off the scent again. An English huntsman, if he had been a good one, would have held his pack beyond the foiled ground, and have known, too, that the contamination of the sheep, without the aid of the Devil, would have clung to the feet of the wolf far beyond the ground on which the sheep had been.

As the wolf lived on, grown bold with age and infirmity, and desperate with distress, having become almost blind, the fell marauder began to seek his prey in broad day, his eyes no longer able to distinguish light from darkness, and when sheep were pastured in the narrow cultivated valleys between the woods, he would suddenly appear, and chase them very often in vain, for a French sheep is always in far better racing than roasting condition.

It is the custom in this part of France, and it may be so elsewhere, to send a little girl out to tend the sheep; so one day when the purblind hungry old wolf made one of his descents upon the flock, in his vain attempt to catch a sheep, he ran up against the terrified child, who was in charge of them, and his blood and appetite being up, he seized and killed her for his dinner. As the tiger, who tastes human flesh, thence and for ever after prefers the hideous meal to any other, and becomes known as a "man eater;" so this wolf, after his first glut with the warm

blood and tender limbs of juvenile humanity, commenced a predilection for a similar repast, and on several occasions, by the sides of woods, killed and devoured the only creatures not capable of escaping from him. On the last occasion save one, an alarm having been given, the villagers scared him from his prey, recovered a portion of the mutilated body of a child, and then, as their dread foe retreated, they saw that in regaining the wood, he fell against the trees and stumps, and they concluded that he was blind.

After thus being scared from his prey, for a long time nothing more was heard of this wolf, and the country around had ceased to fear for the flocks, when one day he again returned, and, failing to catch a sheep, as usual killed the girl in charge of them, but had only time to lacerate and devour one of her thighs, when the blouses were down on him, and he was forced to retire.

As they bore the poor girl's body to a cottage in the village, a great quantity of blood flowed from the two arteries of the limb upon the road, and, of course, on the threshold of the door where but a few hours before the poor child had passed in the spring tide of health and youth. As is the custom there, an old woman sat up with the corpse, and while nodding over her clasped hands, the dull sound of some approaching footsteps smote upon her ear, and made her listen to the noise. The night was as dark as pitch, and as silent as an airless stagnant atmosphere could make it, and she distinctly heard the long slow gallop of some heavy animal coming down the road

direct for the house of mourning. Louder and louder grew the heavy foot-fall, as stride by stride came the monster on, till with a heavy bump against the door, enough to shake the cottage, it struck the panels, and seemed to recoil in savage surprise and rage, for she could hear a heavy snarling growl, and then the slow departure of a lingering foot, by the way that foot had come. In the morning the pad of the old blind wolf was traced on the road to the cottage door, and away from it again, and, no doubt, the famished monster had run the blood of his victim to the roof which contained her remains.

So great was the terror occasioned by this wolf, that an extra reward was offered for his head, when, having escaped the clumsy chase of the Frenchmen, at last, on a moonlight night, the carcase of a dead horse having been placed in the forest as a bait, a man concealed himself in a tree, and while the wolf with famished eagerness was tearing at the flesh, he was ingloriously deprived of existence. The skin of this old wolf, which was at the Château Sauvages when I returned to England, was of a tawny grey, or nearly white, betokening the greatest age.

Of all the empty farces that came under my observation in the French forests, was the one in regard to "the Limier," or huntsman who was sent out at break of day with a hound in a leash, to harbour the animal suggested for the chase. The object of this so-called huntsman was to track a boar or wolf, and then, by drawing his hound across the track, to see if the scent was fresh. If the hound owned it gladly,

then that was held to proclaim the beast at hand, when, having marked the spot where the creature went into the quarter of the cover, the "Limier" went a long distance round, and if he could not track the animal out of the portion of the wood again by eye or by nose, there the beast was said to be harboured, and the hunt was fixed.

On every occasion, save one, when I saw this tried, the bear or wolf was so far ahead that, in my note book, I wrote the following lines:—

"The forest is wild, but wilder far
My friends who engage in the sylvan war.
No management, method, no cunning, no craft,
The wolf and the wild boar must think us all daft.
As Irishmen say—"By the breath of all powers,"—
The 'Limier's' behind his boar twenty-four hours."

In each case we approached the supposed lair miles before we were anywhere near it, with loud triumphant fanfare on the immense horns, enough to drive every wild dénizen of the woods far away, leaving behind them varied "lines" crossing each other, as bewildering to hounds as to men, and making it impossible to know whether we were "on heel," on wolf, boar, roe deer, hare, or martin cat, for the hounds ran all alike, and babbled to each other, to deceive their masters, and to amuse themselves.

The wild boar, if he is "le vieux solitaire," knows a French huntsman to the greatest nicety, and how to baffle his pursuit, and to teach him respect for his tusks. Thus, if an old boar finds that the "Limier"

is after him, he simply retires slowly, very often leaving the deep and significant impression of his angry tusks on the soft bark of trees, for the intruder on his lair to find, by way of a card at home, and then when he thinks that the Frenchman has come to the conclusion that he has harboured him, and gone away, the boar trots off, leaving behind him nothing more than a stale line. Late in the day, for French fixtures for hunting are never kept to the hour, the gentlemen supposing that the quarry *is* harboured, approach the place with roaring horns, and noise enough to send the already disturbed and wary beast miles farther on. When the hounds are laid on, and the cry seems to incline this way and that, again the horns are played to head the chase from such country as is supposed to be the most difficult, and very frequently this noise is kept up not in front of the boar, but behind the boar, and between him and the hounds.

Such a thorough knowledge does the "vieux solitaire" display of the peasantry that in the open day he will often pay their potatoe plots a visit, and scarce move from his repast, though men, women, and children unite in shouting at him. As the deer do in England when the bucks are in season, he knows very well who it is that is after him, and he cares no more for the wind of men, nor the sight of them, if he can make out their occupation or design, than he does for women and children.

The wild boar of France is a very stout runner, like the wolf, if you do not over-pace him; but if over-

paced by a sufficient body of hounds that run together, then the old boar can very soon be brought to bay, and the wolf rolled over. What induces the supposition as to the immense stoutness of these two animals is, that the boar is followed only by a few hounds, who reach his hams at long intervals, and are therefore incapable of holding him to bay. He pauses for a few moments, and then trots on, and at these inefficient and transient "bays," never awaiting the making in of the huntsmen. Thus the "bay" affords him rest rather than increased weariness, and the run, unless a chance shot wounds the quarry, has really no end. Hounds, as I have previously said, are more afraid of a sow than of the "vieux sanglïer," because the latter charges only to clear the way, and dashes on with an unwavering impetus, while the sow runs at and after the hounds, and if she catches one, she will hold him in her trough-like jaws, and kneeling, cast all her weight on his prostrate ribs. I observed a sow turn the whole pack of hounds out of a wood, in which, the only time I ever saw it done, the limier had really harboured her, and often and often during the earlier part of that day I could hear her, under the Nut Copse Wood, run angrily blowing after any hound she met, who might be paying his attention to smaller and safer game. Thinking to induce her to do the same, in mistake, by me, I left my horse, and crawled in on my hands and knees, but she was not to be so taken in, and in each instance that I heard her come near me, she made me out, and ran off with great precipitation.

The best day's sport with boars was on a lovely morning, with an immense old solitaire, who favoured our pursuit by having a slight malformation in one of his fore feet. This fact, as well as his old and savage inclination to fight on every opportunity, enabled us to keep with him, for if, through the riot or slackness of the hounds he got ahead, he always waited till we came up to him again. Several times also the work was taken off his shoulders by wolves, and as I rode to the hounds, and not to wait at points, I was often at a loss to know which "foot" it was they were holding.

On one occasion, on the chase reaching the verge of a cultivated valley, as my fine old white horse flew over the fence around the woods into the open, almost upon a peasant and his team and plough, the man, in immense excitement, pointed to the woods on the opposite side of the valley, and shouted, in French of course, though I render it in English, "The wolf, the wolf, the great wolf there!"

"Non, non, le sanglier, c'est le sanglier pour moi," I cried in deep vexation, for I knew I had not a chance with the wolf, and stopping the hounds and turning back, I got on a line again where I thought the boar must be. In a very short time, however, the cry again came to a point of the forest verging on the open, and ere I could gallop round the corner of the woods, my ear told me that the tongues of the hounds were no longer thrown beneath the trees, when on rounding the corner I saw them running away over the open.

"Away—away, gone away," sounded my shrill hunting-horn, but not one of my companions appeared to the summons, though I had taught them the English points of chase; so supposing again that I had left the boar behind me, I gave old Coco his head, and with a swing over two small fences, I was soon crossing the head of the leading hounds, and stopping them, by no means a difficult thing to do. While thus occupied, shrill screams met my ear, and a girl and a boy, frantic with excitement, came running up pointing away over the fields, choking with their eagerness, but still distinctly crying out, "Le loup! le loup!"

"Oui, le loup,—I know it," was my reply, as I got possession once more of the hounds, and was taking them back to the woods.

"Non," reiterated the girl, throwing herself almost under the feet of my horse, with her hair wildly dishevelled and streaming over her shoulders, and in immense agitation—"not that way—oh! you do not understand!—here is the wolf!—here!—here!"

Taking no heed of her cries, however, back I went, and, as I approached a corner of the forest, a tall blouse emerged, whose acquaintance I had previously made, as he had begged of me some powder, and had seemed to take a strange interest in all I did, and rather to attach himself to me as a follower, when he, throwing out his arm in the direction from which I was returning, and exclaimed, "Le loup!"

"Le loup est parti là bas!" he shouted.

"Oui," was my reply, "mais où est le sanglier?"

"Ici, ici!" he cried, charmed to have a chance to aid me, "I will show you his foot."

On following him down a little path, there, sure enough, was the deep slot of the heavy boar, and, with a thankful blessing to St. Hubert, again I cheered the hounds on the line of what I knew to be a sullen and a beaten beast, and one with whom I could cope on something like even terms. Round and in this quarter of the cover, the boar then hung for an hour or more, contenting himself with keeping the hounds at a walking bay; the only three of the pack who came to anything like close quarters were the three young English fox-hound bitches—in short, they had headed the cry, and done the work during the whole of the day. This hanging to one quarter, as well as the repeated notes upon my horn, at last brought up not only my friends, but all the blouses, and the quarter of the wood at last was pretty well surrounded. It was impossible for me, however, to station myself for a shot, for the French hounds were constantly breaking away after a rabbit, or on the heel of some stale line, in short, on anything that afforded them an excuse for escaping dangerous approximation; so my attentions were entirely fixed on keeping the hounds to the boar.

Suddenly, at the other end of the quarter of the wood away from me, I heard the report of a gun, and then listened for some notes on the huge cumbrous horns to tell me what had happened. All was still; no note of warning reached me, no holloa or shout of any sort; and still hounds continued to speak

around me, and I knew not what to think. At last, it struck me that I no longer heard the lighter livelier tongues of the English hounds, so, at full speed, I gained the spot where I had heard the gun, and knew that many of my friends had been posted; and not a soul was to be seen. Casting my eyes to the ground, however, I saw their tracks, and that they had gone at speed, horsemen and footmen together.

There also, cast away as useless lumber, when alone its gruff points could have signalled events to my ear, lay a huge French horn, the invariable custom of the French huntsman when he is excited, and one I had previously experienced on similar occasions; and then, on swinging into the fields round the corner of the wood, I beheld an ensanguined lone and miserable object, standing with cowered crest and drooping head under a hedge. It was motionless and dyed with blood, but I knew it to be a hound. It was one of the English fox-hound bitches, her whose merry tongue I had so often cheered that day. Poor sleek-coated industrious and speedy "Barricade!" The boar then had rid himself of one of his most gallant pursuers; for he had ripped her up on the right side from flank to ear, and she was yet bleeding from the jugular vein. Shouting to a peasant who stood close by, I said, "Le pauvre, pauvre chien à vous."

Again I hastened on into the wood, very nearly catching a fall from the insertion of a bent grower from the high copse getting under my knee, and Coco's falling on his head at the same time; but we

righted without grief, and then, after the high growers and boughs had done rattling on the front of my hunting-cap, my ear caught the repeated sound of fire-arms. I came up in time only to see the huge boar lying dead, and forty Frenchmen in full gratulation over his body. In short, at last I had driven him back on the line of his pursuers, and, after the reception of eight balls, he fell dead.

The conversation of these forty or more Frenchmen over the prostrate boar, in continuance and confusion, resembled the chattering of a large flock of fieldfares, when, in England, they assemble previous to their migratory flight. Every man talked, no one listened; and nothing but sheer exhaustion brought the Babel of sounds to a happy close.

The peasant to whom I had assigned poor Barricade was a good fellow, and he brought her to the village at which my friend, D'Anchald, regaled the assembled blouses with the cooked entrails of the reeking boar, washed down with claret, or vin ordinaire, so vicious that I could not drink it until mulled with spices and a liberal addition of brandy. I proceeded then to sew up the gash for poor Barricade, which extended superficially from one flank, over and across the ribs, up the neck to the ear, where it had entered more deeply, and wounded the jugular vein. Maurice D'Anchald saw the boar strike her, and fling her into the air, striking her a second time ere she could regain her legs.

While I took up the vein, and sewed the skin together, the blouses were so intensely curious to

watch what they called the "tall Foreigner," that it was as much as D'Anchald and his sons could do to keep them from crowding round the cottage door and excluding the light. The operation was completely successful, and before I left the hospitable château of my most kind friend, the hound was completely out of danger.

CHAPTER XV.

LORD MELBOURNE AT HOME.

Accession of her Majesty—Comparison of George III. and the late Prince Consort—Lord Melbourne when First Lord of the Treasury—Lords Holland, Lansdowne, Palmerston, and Carlisle—A Court favourite—Lord Russell—Character of Lord Melbourne—The Duke of Sussex—The French ambassador—Dinner and dessert—A reminiscence of the Beefsteak Club—The Duke of York's *bon-mot* on General England—The Prince of Wales—Sheridan and George Selwyn—An interrupted story—The Prince in a fix—Patronage of art in England—Napoleon's remains—The soirée—Designs of the King of the French.

A CHANGE, at last, came over the spirit of my (political) dream. A youthful Queen had taken the position which had been filled by the royal connoisseur of "fat, fair, and forty," and then by his brother—to become a few years later a wife, whose pure heart and cultivated intellect developed feelings and ideas as opposite as light to darkness to those which my respected godfather displayed during his period of regal responsibility.

While a refinement, hitherto unknown, now prevailed in the decorations of the new palatial residence that had been built on the site of "the Queen's House," at Pimlico, as it was called when the residence of Queen Charlotte, an air of domestic comfort

mingled with them that was much more readily appreciated by the popular judgment.

Part of this wholesome change had, no doubt, been effected during the reign of the Queen's immediate predecessors, the Sailor King and his amiable consort —but the cleanness of the sweep at Court was produced when the place had to be made worthy of being the home of a virgin princess; since when, her marriage had introduced an entirely new element into the establishment, that continued the improvement till it had attained the perfection which became a national blessing and a national boast.

I do not either ignore or undervalue the decorum that existed at St. James's during the long rule of George the Third and Queen Charlotte, but that estimable sovereign (bless his pigtail!) ought not to be compared in courtly accomplishments with the late Prince Consort. His Majesty may have looked the English farmer better than his Royal Highness, though I doubt if the too sanguine owner of Tiptree Hall would say that he farmed as skilfully; as a patron of science and art, the good old King lacked the intelligence and taste the Prince possessed.

As for "the sweet Queen," as Madame D'Arblay styles her so very frequently, she had many excellent qualities doubtless, and I desire to mention her with becoming reverence; but as the female head of the English Court, Queen Charlotte cannot be named in the same paragraph with her talented grand-daughter. They may, however, be said to stand on the same high ground in the affections of the people of England as

mothers and wives. In their domestic relations it is impossible to estimate too highly the claims of either on our admiration and our gratitude.

These were the halcyon days, be it remembered, of "Reform." The political party to which I was then attached, as a county member, directing considerable influence, had for some time been masters of the situation, their leaders, by an unsparing use of professions, having at command a working majority in the House of Commons. The Government considered itself popular, and the Premier believed himself supremely so. He was a nobleman possessed of every attractive qualification likely to ensure success at Court—had long enjoyed the reputation of a social favourite, had been eminently handsome, and though report had hitherto chronicled his successes only as a social favourite, it was believed that the same accomplishments might realize more important triumphs in the chief of a popular administration. It may be supposed that there was such an excess of statesmanship in the Cabinet that it could easily be dispensed with in the Premier. Certain it is that Lord Melbourne's pretensions were not those that had recommended either a Pitt, a Wellington, or a Peel.

It was at this period that the First Lord of the Treasury gave what deserves to be styled a state banquet to his principal colleagues and supporters. I am not at liberty to say to whom I am indebted for the following account of what took place then and there. The reader must therefore be content to accept the narrative with as much faith as can be

accorded to intelligence the authority for which must not be divulged.

Among the stars and garters and other insignia of official distinction grouped round a magnificently furnished dining-table, might easily have been recognised the Friar Tuck physiognomy of Lord Holland.

He was no longer a leader of Opposition—he was a Cabinet Minister. Moreover, he was a guest at a state banquet. He therefore contented himself with doing justice to the *cuisine*, looking conscious that Government might be observed from a very pleasant point of view, and taking a modest part in the conversation, when it appeared to him necessary to say something.

On his right sat the venerable figure of Lord Lansdowne. In the tranquil face, and even then whitening locks which surrounded it, there was some difficulty in recalling the energetic Lord Henry Petty of former years. But it soon became evident that the President of the Council of 1840 was the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1806. Time while ripening the statesman's experience had mellowed the intelligence of the man of the world, and the heart of the genial old man had lost nothing of the manly sincerity which had distinguished it in the first stage of his honourable career. He was a link between the present and the past—the colleague of Fox and Grenville in that bright but brief display of "All the Talents;" and the mild light of his clear eyes seemed to express the satisfaction of his mind in sharing the triumph of the party to which he had remained so

consistently attached. A no less interesting link with the past might have been discovered in another of the distinguished guests. The pupil of Pitt, the supporter of Perceval, and the colleague of Castlereagh, Lord Palmerston was now adapting himself to circumstances that eventually were to secure to him a pre-eminence of position and of public confidence that neither of those celebrated ministers enjoyed.

Opposite shone the round, fair face—impressed with a placid contentment of spirit that gave him the air of a pleased schoolboy—of Lord Morpeth, better known afterwards as the Earl of Carlisle, who so satisfactorily for many years played the most prominent part in the viceregal pageant maintained at far more expense than profit in Dublin. Subsequently to the period to which I am now referring, I knew him well, and a better-hearted man never existed.

The young man at the moment laughingly addressing him was a *protégé* of his host, and had received a political post through an influence which was still considerable, but had been paramount in a former reign, as I have already sufficiently illustrated. The rule of Court favourites was supposed to have gone out when Reform came in; nevertheless, this handsome son of a very attractive mother, according to palace gossip, had created an impression which might have led to important results had it not been superseded by one in every way more satisfactory.

It is highly probable that there never was any foundation for the rumour. At any rate, the hero of it conducted himself in a manner totally unlike that

of one suffering under an overwhelming disappointment. He surrendered himself heartily to the *agrémens* of the scene in which he was an actor, and ate, drank, laughed, talked, and listened with the thorough enjoyment of a favourite of fortune whose horizon is without a cloud.

Almost concealed by a towering *epergne* were the small head and rigid physiognomy of a scion of a ducal house, who had been one of the most active leaders in the Reform movement. He was reaping the reward of consistency, apparently perfectly content with the harvest. How long this feeling would endure no one present could have been bold enough to prophesy.

At the head of the table, the pleasing features of Lord Melbourne appeared to express the owner's idea that the first duty of a Premier was to take as much enjoyment out of the position as it could be made to afford. His hair showed indications of advancing age, but his eyes were as bright as if glowing with the fire of youth. He looked as though he had been born smiling, and had ever since continued to wear the same sunny aspect; as if his sky had always been *couleur de rose*, and his countenance had caught its bright reflection.

Unfortunately, all this was superficial—at best but a brilliant social electrotype. There was nothing solid in his pretensions, and of this he could not help sometimes becoming aware. He was essentially a man of pleasure, and deficient in the higher requisites of a man of business. He felt bored by the

duties of office, but was completely at home in those of hospitality.

Whether at Brockett Hall or in Downing Street, entertaining a select circle of friends or supporters, Lord Melbourne was sure to be seen to the best advantage. No one could render himself more agreeable, and few could have become more popular; but there were dark shadows on this pleasant portrait. A lamentable incident that had lately occurred at Court betrayed his want of judgment in a manner that showed total unfitness for responsibility.

In this circle of Whig leaders, two were absent—one was Lord Grey, the other Lord Durham—who deserve to be considered the two extremes of Whig opinions. They had been got rid of for being too slow and too fast for their colleagues.

In their places, my authority for these descriptions had the honour of meeting two personages whose presence more than compensated for their loss. One was his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, a most agreeable combination of the royal philosopher and the patrician man of the world—the other a distinguished Frenchman, who was trying to combine the gifts of the *littérateur* with the qualifications of the diplomatist.

I need not dwell upon the furnishing or serving of the dinner—a detail of the upholstery of the *salle-à-manger*, and of the dresses of the company, seems to me as unnecessary as a description of the servants' liveries, or an inventory of their master's plate. A banquet, produced under the direction of such a cook as presided over the *cuisine* on this important

occasion, could only have been done justice to by the editor of the *Almanach des Gourmands*. My business is with the host and his guests, not with the domestics and the dishes. All I need say is, that there was nothing attempted *à la Russe*—there was the usual courses of soup, fish, flesh, fowl, with the favourite *entrées*, and then the customary dessert.

During the repast, what little conversation was attempted, was only remarkable for its absence of everything approaching political allusion. The accomplished host led the way with his well-known tact, seconded by the Royal Duke on his right hand, and presently jokes, warranted not to interfere with the digestion, elicited as fair a show of mirth as could be expected from so stately and so enlightened an assembly. When the servants had withdrawn, and the customary toasts, cut very short, had been drunk, preceded by the usual orations, there was less restraint. The now lively host set an example which could scarcely fail to act on the social spirit of the most reserved of the company; everyone became hail fellow well met with his neighbour. The Duke of Sussex talked about books with Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland making a third, and Lord Melbourne entering into a discussion with his French guest respecting the merits of the opera and ballet in Paris and in London. The rest had their own topics, with which they appeared to be equally entertained.

Among other qualifications possessed by Lord Melbourne was that of a good relater of those social anecdotes that usually figure prominently in after-

dinner conversation. Lord Holland had been alluding to the jovial disposition of the late King when Duke of Clarence, and described a carouse at the Beef-steak Club, in which his Royal Highness had been associated with the Duke of Norfolk, a celebrated *bon-vivant* of that period; the Duke of Leinster, who equally enjoyed the feast of reason in a juicy steak, and the flow of soul in a steaming bowl of punch; Charles Morris, the writer of convivial songs, which he sang himself with a spirit that greatly heightened the Bacchanalian fervour of the company; Sir John Cox Hippesley, John Philip Kemble, Stephenson the banker, and other good men and true, less known to fame.

The Duke of Sussex then did justice to the eminently social qualities of his deceased brother Frederick (Duke of York), saying good humouredly that of him it could not be averred, as it was of his ancestor of merry memory, that "he never did a foolish thing and never said a wise one." He need not, his Royal Highness remarked, refer to the former, but one of the few clever pleasantries of which he was the author, he uttered during a *levée* at the HorseGuards when he was Commander-in-Chief. Among the officers presented to him was General England, remarkable for his enormous height and the bulk of his limbs. "England!" he repeated to his aide-de-camp, as the General left the apartment, "By George, he ought to be called *Great Britain*, with 'the Calf of Man' to *boot!*"

Lord Melbourne now essayed his anecdotal powers in behalf of the eldest of the royal brothers, of whose

sociality there existed abundant traditions in the principal clubs, particularly at Brookes's, of which his Royal Highness was elected a member when Prince of Wales. The Prince was anxious to get Sheridan admitted a member, and kindly exerted his personal influence to secure his brilliant friend that distinction; but at every ballot the one black ball that excludes was always present. There was little difficulty in tracing this to a gentleman who had long reigned supreme at the club in the realm of repartee and facetious banter—the celebrated George Selwyn, who was evidently apprehensive of being superseded by the gifted candidate. The latter, however, was not to be so easily kept out.

About an hour before another election was to come off, the Prince, accompanied by Sheridan, entered the waiting-room, and sent for Mr. Selwyn. The latter quickly presented himself—a somewhat feeble but still lively old gentleman, studiously neat, though in apparel of an obsolete fashion. His Royal Highness was unusually gracious, which much gratified the reputed wit, and as his gratification became more evident, the Prince dexterously drew his companion into the conversation, who at once employed all his powers of pleasing. They proved as irresistible as they had done on many another equally important occasion.

George Selwyn, who was distinguished for an aptitude for saying ludicrous exaggerations rather than for genuine wit, despite his prejudices, was unable to resist the sparkling anecdotes that followed

each other in rapid succession. As the Prince laughed heartily, he could not show such ill-breeding as to look grave. As his Royal Highness prompted the jest, he could, in courtesy, as little restrain the hilarity it ought to excite.

The Prince was in unusual high spirits, and seemed singularly anxious that the venerable humourist should be amused; and the extreme friendliness of his manner led the latter more and more to surrender himself to the charm of his entertainer.

"Now, Sherry!" exclaimed his Royal Highness, with increased heartiness, "do tell Mr. Selwyn that capital story. By G—! George," he added, turning familiarly to the old gentleman, "you must hear Sherry tell that. D— me! if it isn't the drollest thing you ever heard. But I must leave you, my dear fellow, for a few minutes. Don't go away; by G—! I've got something d——d particular to say to you when I come back."

The Prince hurried out of the room as if he had suddenly recollected an appointment, and George Selwyn having had the royal command laid upon him in so flattering and emphatic a manner, readily gave his attention to the promised narrative.

Sheridan lost no time in plunging into an Irish story of such excessive absurdity that his listener could not avoid showing a lively appreciation of its extravagance. The old gentleman was laughing heartily when the Prince of Wales returned.

"Sherry, my boy!" he exclaimed, as he entered with a well-affected air of hurry and impatience,

"by G—! Fitzpatrick has laid a wager with Fox, and d—— me if they haven't agreed that you shall decide it for them. By G—! Sherry, you must go at once or there'll be a quarrel."

"With all my heart, sir," replied the ready peace-maker, "if your Royal Highness will go on with my story."

"To be sure, to be sure! D—n me! you must make haste. They're at high words. By G—d! I cannot afford to lose such valuable friends."

Away went Sheridan eager to settle a dispute that threatened such very serious consequences, leaving George Selwyn a little discomposed by the interruption of a narrative in which he was not only amused but interested. He looked inquiringly into the apparently anxious face of his companion.

"Well, George, what is it?" the latter inquired.

"You promised, sir, to continue the story Mr. Sheridan was telling me when your Royal Highness did us the honour to return."

"Oh yes—Sherry's story," said the Prince in a more hesitating manner. He had heard, as he thought, all his friend's stories so often that he had them by heart. But then it was imperative that he should know which had been selected. "Of course—of course, my dear George. Where did he leave off?"

"When Father Tim was going to pocket the bottle of whisky."

"Father Tim!" repeated the Prince, running hastily over the principal incidents he had heard described;

but he could not recollect such a name. It was, however, imperative to say something, so the impressed story-teller made an effort to connect the unknown hero with a familiar legend.

"So Father Tim took the whisky," he began slowly, as if to gain time for recollection. "The Irish priests are partial to that beverage, my dear George. D—n me! sir, they prefer it to Burgundy or claret. They do, by G—!"

"Yes, sir. But this Father Tim—what was he up to, and where was he going when he took the bottle?"

"Up to, my dear fellow? Going? Of course he was taking it home to warm his heart with a glass of punch."

The old gentleman did not appear quite satisfied with this rational explanation.

"Well, the priest went quietly along the road," continued the narrator, "till he came up to a man driving a pig."

"Stop, sir. I don't quite comprehend. Your Royal Highness will be so good as to excuse me. I haven't heard how Father Tim got out of the bog."

"The bog!" repeated the Prince, a little bewildered with the conviction that he had undertaken to finish a story of which he had never heard a word. "The bog! the bog! D—n me! George, I had quite forgot the bog. Of course he found his way over it at last, though not without considerable difficulty, you may depend."

"But what became of Biddy Mulroony's gander?" demanded Selwyn; "and the cock and the bull and the roasted soldier?"

The Prince stared at the questioner; then the absurdity of his position struck his Royal Highness irresistibly, and he burst into a loud laugh, to his companion's increased mystification. At this crisis Sheridan re-entered the room.

"Congratulate me, my dear Mr. Selwyn," he cried, advancing to that gentleman with an air of unmistakeable exultation, and shaking him heartily by the hand. The old beau believed that the quarrel had been settled, but could not quite comprehend the necessity of his joining in so cordial a demonstration in consequence.

"I am very glad, Mr. Sheridan," he began courteously—

"Of course you are; I've been elected unanimously a member of the club. There was not even *one black ball.*"

"Confound you and your cock and bull story!" replied Selwyn, now aware how completely he had been duped. But his sense of the humorous presently got the better of his mortification, and he joined the Prince in laughing at the clever hoax.

This story was well told, and afforded intense amusement. Others followed, and the hilarity of the party proclaimed the success of each narrator.

I have been told that Lord Melbourne, when in office, affected interest in the fine arts, but this was

much the same sort of regard he manifested for more recondite subjects. In the course of the evening Lord Lansdowne, whose taste in art was sound, and knowledge of the schools extensive, adverted to the experiment then making to form a National Gallery in London, which elicited from the French guest a patriotic eulogium on the galleries of the Louvre and Versailles.

Lord Melbourne ventured to speak apologetically of English art, and dwelt on its limited appreciation by his more practical countrymen. Apparently he drew his conclusions from the works of his friend Haydon. His estimation of them was sufficiently correct, but he little knew that his practical countrymen would, in a few years, pay for English paintings at a valuation far in advance of the market value of the *chef-d'œuvres* of the old masters.

Ingeniously M. —— led the conversation to Napoleon's patronage of artistic merit, and then easily glided into a proposal then exciting a profound sensation in France, of transporting the remains of the deceased Emperor from St. Helena to Paris. A lively discussion ensued, in which all the leading members of the Government joined; Lord Holland's Bonapartist predilections coming out with all their ancient fervour. The more sagacious members of the Cabinet might have wondered what motive had induced the astute "King of the Barricades" to foster a sentiment in his changeable countrymen, the connexion of which with his dynasty the clearest

judgment could not perceive; but as the naval expedition to bring back to France the great enemy of *perfide Albion*, he had placed under the command of one of his own sons, who had acquired immense popularity by publishing a scheme for a successful invasion of England, there could not be much doubt that he intended to turn it to profit.

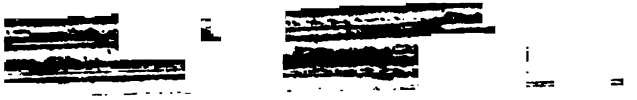
A certain statesman, who had even then served a long apprenticeship to the craft, joined in the liberality expressed by his colleagues; not, however, without a mental reservation that anticipated the hoisting of the engineer with his own petard. No reference was made to the apparently reckless young man, whose Quixotic enterprise at Strasburg had been punished by expatriation. No one of the company seemed aware of his existence; nevertheless there is good reason for imagining that, with one of the party at least, the living nephew was quite as much an object of interest as the dead uncle.

The host fulfilled all the obligations of his position with his customary skill, charming all his guests with that cordial *bonhomie* for which he was famous, and particularly the intelligent foreigner to whom he had paid such marked attention. Coffee having been introduced, the party adjourned to the drawing-room to enjoy a concert, to which a larger assemblage had been invited. Here also the First Lord of the Treasury was eminently at home. No one who then had an opportunity of observing his manner—especially to the ladies who kept thronging into the

brilliant suite of rooms—could have supposed that he had the slightest idea of the cares of office. He seems to have realized the idea thrown out by Lord Castlereagh, as to "the bed of roses" the Whigs were to find on succeeding to the responsibilities of government. The distinguished Frenchman, who had accompanied the other guests from the dining-room, gazed with pleased surprise on so felicitous a repetition of a fashionable Parisian salon as was the scene before him.

As his mind was of a studious and philosophic cast, he might have entertained some doubts, during the pauses in the performances of the celebrated Italian *artistes* engaged for the evening's entertainment, as to the supposed burthen of the conduct of a great nation. But the soft cadences of Grisi, the marvellous vocal flexibility of Rubini, and the sonorous magnificence of Lablache, dispersed whatever grave reflections they might have induced. What was it to him if Atlas had got rid of his load, and was disposed to enjoy himself? Why should not the head of the English Government cry "Vive la bagatelle!" when that most sagacious of French rulers, the then popular "King of the French," was developing such prodigious designs of national and family aggrandizement? If he asked himself such questions, so clever a man and so good a Frenchman could only have smiled contentedly by way of answer.

Alas for the stability of ministerial enjoyments and royal designs, the days of both were already num-

bered! Of the few survivors of the guests of that pleasant host, M. —— is left with ample leisure for philosophic reflection, and with better materials for speculating on the future of England and France, than he had when he quitted on that memorable evening the reception rooms of the then popular, now almost forgotten, First Lord of the Treasury.

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